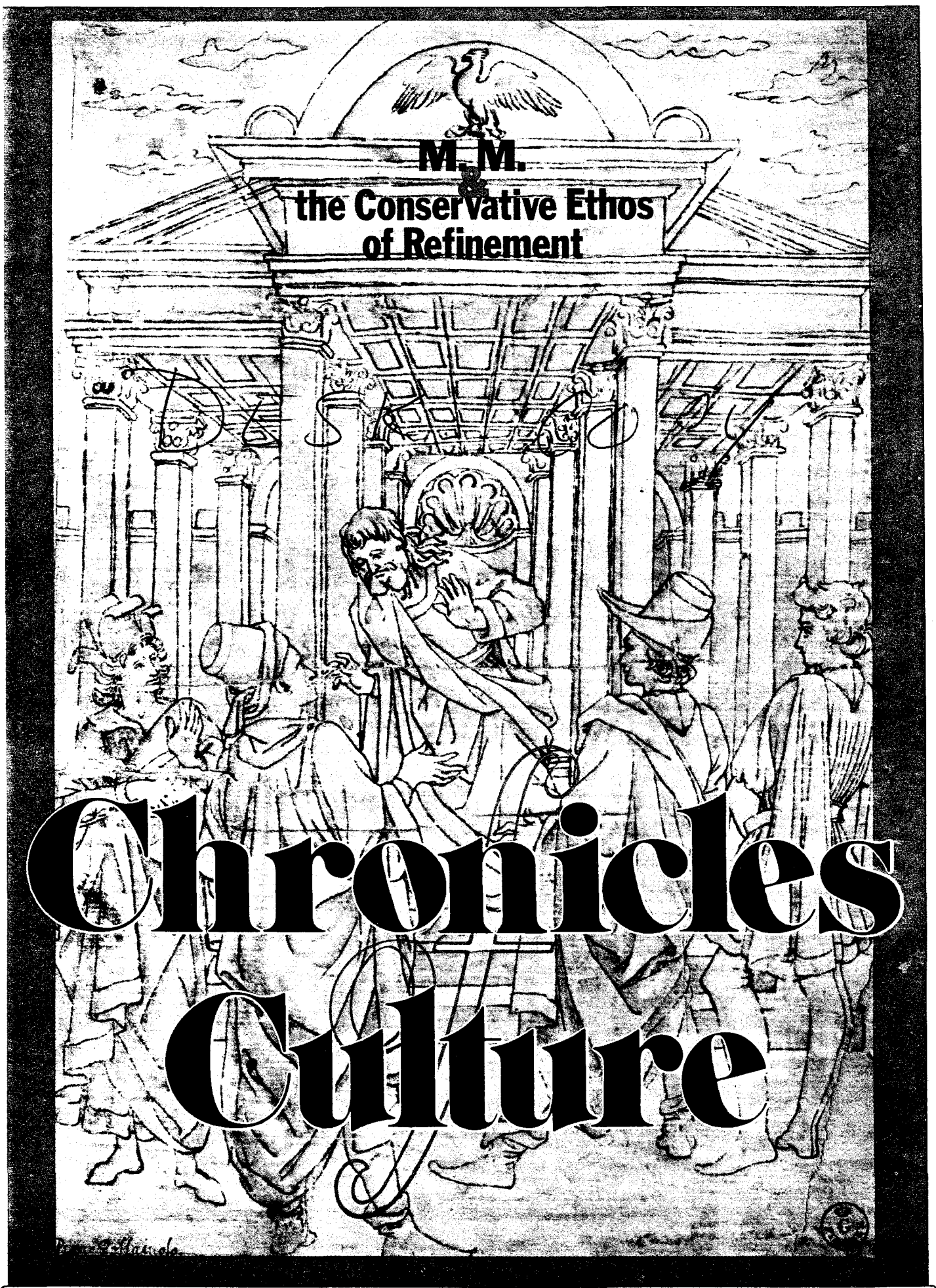

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Chronicles of Culture

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M.M. & the Conservative Ethos of Refinement

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COMMENT

The Moral Majority has emerged as the favorite bête noire of academicians, journalists and the routine proponents of liberal culture. Among conservative intellectuals, the Reverend Jerry Falwell's crusade against godlessness and immorality has provoked considerable debate and a variety of positions. In the May 1981 issue of The Rockford Papers *Dr. James J. Thompson, Jr. expressed his qualified approval of the Moral Majority. He lauded the movement for its often-trenchant critique of the liberal culture, but he also faulted it for some of its methods and proposed reforms. In the following comment Professor Paul Gottfried responds to some of Dr. Thompson's criticisms and advances another view of the Moral Majority which can be regarded as both conservative and intellectually responsible.*

James Thompson, in his commentary on the Moral Majority, makes a critical observation that invites a response. He ascribes to the Moral Majority's spokesmen, whom he personally respects, a general insensitivity to the right of free expression. This alleged insensitivity is linked to the combination of righteous zeal and intellectual innocence which Dr. Thompson properly perceives as a defining characteristic of his subject. Yet the unadorned, patriotic-moral fervor which he criticizes renders that group a powerful political force. Nor do I find anything intrinsically "low-brow" about the Moral Majority's plea for traditional family values. Conservative scholars and theologians have been making the same plea for years, and in recent months the *New Oxford Review* has begun to advertise its irritation that the public should identify the case for social tradition more with Jerry Falwell than with its own confreres. But what else should one expect in a world composed mostly of nonintellectuals? My former mentor, Will Herberg, never tired of reminding me: "Intellectuals, too, can be smart if they only stop making faces at history." There are certainly times when intellectuals should view history with distaste, but such a reaction may be inappropriate for educated conservatives as they consider the Moral Majority's attitude toward First Amendment liberties. Are these modern Jeremiahs attacking our constitutional rights as the Founding Fathers understood them? Or are they simply reacting against one particular interpretation of the First Amendment that gained widespread judicial support for the first time during the 1950's? The question may not admit a simple response, but it may be useful to reflect on some historical data.

A favorite liberal dogma not to the contrary, the Founding Fathers never designed the First Amendment to provide for sociopolitical parity between religionists and atheists. The religious freedom they proclaimed was intended to keep Congress from establishing a national church. Such an institution, it was feared, would then become allied to the federal government which might withhold religious liberty from such minorities as Baptists and Quakers and, possibly, bar them from holding political office. The restriction was placed upon Congress and the federal government, but not upon the clergy or the states. Contrary to John Anderson's surly judgment, clergymen enjoy the same constitutional right as other citizens to speak out on political questions, even from the conservative side. Moreover, state governments are not prohibited from establishing regional churches: for example, Massachusetts assigned a privileged status to the Congregationalist religion until as recently as 1833.

As for the First Amendment and free speech, here too an historical lesson may be useful. From the writings of the Founding Fathers, one may easily infer that it was the expression of *political opinions,* not the publication of smut, which the Bill of Rights was to guarantee. Copious scholarship can be cited as proof, most notably Walter Berns's and George Anastaplo's comprehensive studies of the First Amendment. But even Anastaplo errs when he assumes that the Constitution recognizes no limits whatever on the right of political dissent. John Marshall, our first and perhaps most brilliant Chief Justice, found nothing unconstitutional about the once-notorious Sedition Act which was passed during the Presidency of John Adams. Nor did the Jeffersonians who opposed the act condemn it as a violation of the First Amendment. Sedition and seditious libel were both charges that a government such as ours, under the English Common Law, was empowered to bring in defense of public order. The great English jurist, William Blackstone, whom most of the Founding Fathers revered, upheld the right of government to prosecute for sedition. There were, after all, limits to political discourse which reasons of public security imposed.

Of course the Moral Majority has not drawn its constitu-

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tional arguments from Blackstone and Marshall. Like Dr. Thompson, I am under no illusions about the limits of its cultural horizons. Nonetheless, its understanding of the Bill of Rights would probably not have offended the authors of our Constitution. A call for tighter government control over pornography or socially indecent TV sitcoms represents no assault on the First Amendment as it was understood by its authors. A demand of this type may be imprudent, but not unconstitutional, except when viewed from a modern civil-libertarian perspective.

I personally am deeply moved by the Moral Majority's continued reverence for the Constitution—including the Bill of Rights—despite the skewed interpretations of parts of that document which have been proclaimed in recent decades. In the eyes of the Moral Majority's faithfuls the Fourteenth Amendment has been invoked to drive religion out of public life, to legitimate what religious Christians and Jews consider fetal murder and to undergird feminist assaults on traditional social values. The First Amendment has meanwhile been transmuted from the palladium of our liberties into a club with which atheist cranks and seditious journalists might wallop the rest of society. Despite these developments, the Moral Majoritarians continue to praise the Constitution as they denounce its modern interpreters.

And perhaps their faith in this document, and in the American leaders' ability to interpret it properly, may be justified after all. Since the early 70's, Supreme Court decisions have shown a dramatic departure from the judicial support for pornography which was characteristic of the Warren era. At the same time, the Moral Majority's campaign against the media's infatuation with what's known as counterculture has come to focus more on the mobilization of economic pressure and public dissatisfaction than on the use of censorship. Strategically, if not constitutionally, this seems to be a welcome development for those who share the New Right's moral concern but balk at its sometimes awkward rhetoric.

Like Dr. Thompson, I shudder at the "utter degradation" to which civil libertarians would carry freedom of expression; nonetheless, unlike him, I do not look to "an older and wiser conservatism—one well schooled in the knowledge of the fragile balance between free expression and license" to correct the folly perceived. Such conservatism may indeed have on its side education, but thus far it has failed to gain any sizable mass support. Intellectuals on the right will not summon the infantry for the cultural confrontation which besets our society. Their scholastic scruples and taste for subtlety do not equip them for this role. On the other hand, preachers like Falwell do touch chords of response in a mass democracy, and perhaps they can bestow upon conservatism what Hegel might have described as "world-historical significance."

Wisdom in America

As everybody who knows us knows, our fondness for business, capitalism, free enterprise, the market, initiative is enormous. Yet we had to wince when, in the *Wall Street Journal,* we discovered some of the convictions held by Governor John Y. Brown, Jr. of Kentucky which he pronounced to Kentucky's Council on Higher Education:

> Philosophically, I'd a lot rather have more David Joneses and Wendell Cherrys and David Grissoms than I would Aristotles and Socrateses.

The *Journal* explains:

> Messrs. Jones, Cherry and Grissom are directors of Humana, Inc., the fast-growing hospital-management company based in Louisville.

In addition, the *Journal* believes that Governor Brown stands a good chance to become a Democratic Presidential candidate. Now, that's serious. Not everything that's good for Kentucky is good for these United States. Until Governor Brown comprehends that Messrs. Jones, Cherry and Grissom need to acquire a certain knowledge of who Aristotle and Socrates were and what they wanted it will be difficult to sleep quietly without risking nightmares.

Allow me also to discuss a condemnation which Dr. Thompson revives. McCarthyism was not discredited because of its dangerous excesses (which in any case have been vastly exaggerated). It fell apart because of the emotional instability of its leader and the largely negative appeal of its opposition to "the Communists within our gates." McCarthy and his followers, for the most part, lacked the perceptiveness and historical consciousness to transform anti-communism into an affirmation of positive cultural and spiritual values. Unlike the McCarthyites, American liberals have given themselves moral credibility among the public as defenders of civil rights and the downtrodden. Their proselytizing enabled them to capture America's major political party and to wreak havoc on lives and institutions in ways that far surpassed McCarthy's comparatively modest political abuses. Would Dr. Thompson doubt that more people have had their careers disrupted by affirmative action than by the smear of past communist affiliations? Would he question that the liberal-bureaucratic incursion into public education has been more relentless and pervasive than any that occurred during McCarthy's ascendancy?

Some conservatives like to believe that liberals have exercised political power through judicial-bureaucratic means, that is, against the will of the people, but the issue may not be as simple as that. Although liberals certainly did not receive a popular mandate for all their reforms, until November 1980 they managed to do exceedingly well in many elections. And while the public may not have approved of all liberal policies, they did elect enough liberal politicians to insure the implementation of their plans. These plans, which call

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Clear Voices from Darkness

Al Santoli: *Everything We Had;* Random House; New York.

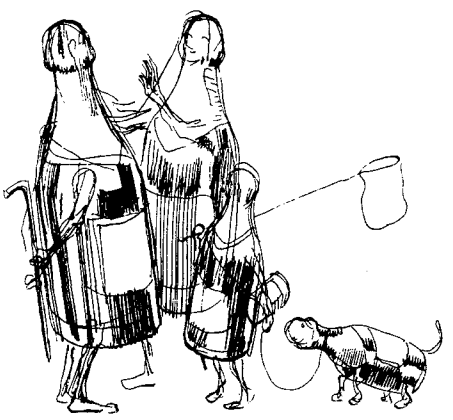
by Edward J. Walsh

Six years have passed since the fall of South Vietnam to the regular army of the communist North, and today that ill-starred country is one instead of two. The political adjustment has been accomplished. The little nation of battle-hardened communists, once the toast of leftists throughout the world, is a pathetic, vicious slave state still reeling from the effects of its "victory." By contrast, the United States, humiliated in March of 1975 by the loss of South Vietnam, has undergone a remarkable recovery. It is ready, then, for a book like *Everything We Had.*

Al Santoli's book is an anthology of the reminiscences of 33 Americans who saw combat in Vietnam; they were collected on tape by Santoli, who is himself one of the narrators. It is a chronology of near-unspeakable horrors experienced by the contributors—that is, an intimate, albeit collective, memoir of the Vietnam War, and at the same time a panoramic portrait of war, any war, all war. Santoli traveled the length of the United States seeking out Vietnam veterans from all branches of the service, as well as nonmilitary government personnel who were there, interrogating them sensitively, drawing on indelibly ingrained memories, evoking the horrors they have struggled to blot out. They tell of terrorist murders at midnight, of men blown apart, of endless grenades and rockets and machine-gun fire, of years in a North Vietnamese prison. These were the details of the Vietnam War that drove ordinary, good-hearted young men mad as they tramped through stifling jungles and neck-deep swamps or flew over them, seeking an enemy they did not understand.

The American soldier knew well enough, however, that the enemy was trying to kill him in an amazing variety of time-tested ways. Old women who would offer him water during the day would hide ammunition for the Viet Cong by night. Young children carried weapons. Everything, it seemed, was mined. The most important lesson learned by Americans in Vietnam, therefore, was the continual nearness of death. They arrived not comprehending the culture of Indochina as one of ages-old warfare and realized, if they were lucky, that the Viet Cong of the late 60's employed the same tactics as the Viet Minh used against the French in the early 50's and Ho Chi Minh's irregulars against the Japanese—and so on, back into history. The Americans who survived were the ones who, as Navy SEAL scout Mike Beamon put it, "learned how to walk like a Viet Cong, move like a Viet Cong, think like a Viet Cong." He continues: "Most Americans didn't know where they were going or what they were doing in Vietnam. They were kind of tromping around. I was moving slowly, hesitating, blending in with my environment."

Santoli has arranged his oral histories to develop a theme of the growth in understanding of what the U.S. was doing in Vietnam. Those who were there in the early 60's had little idea of what their presence in the country meant. Says Jan Barry, an Army radio technician who served there in 1962-63, "I began to realize that *we* were the war. If we wanted to go out and chase people and shoot at them, and get them to shoot back at us, we had a war going on. If we didn't do that, they left us alone. After which it became clear there was a pattern here." Later, he adds: "At some point you began to realize that the people around the military base were clearly cooperating with the guerrillas because they were able to infiltrate the inside of our bases and we hadn't the faintest idea of where the guerrillas were."



As the years passed and American forces were committed inextricably to a land, sea and air war in that fetid corner of Asia, the men learned more of what they were about "in country." They saw assassinations of entire families by the Viet Cong, sadism and cowardice by South Vietnam's regular troops and the tragic efforts of their leadership—from the Pentagon to the platoon leader—to fight the war with tactics learned at the U.S. military academies instead of in the jungle. Some adjustments were made, such as the SEAL infiltration teams and Vietnamese - language intelligence - gathering, but the war itself was conducted as if body counts of guerrillas—who were mostly pressed into service in the South, anyway—would force Ho Chi Minh and his successors to negotiate seriously. The "search and destroy" missions that secured villages by day and lost control of them by night became futile killing exercises. Gradually, as the troops gave up trying to understand what their officers were doing, they concentrated on reducing personal risks to the minimum: self-inflicted wounds became routine, patrols would avoid dangerous areas. The bewilderment of the ordinary soldier and ma-

Mr. Walsh is a frequent contributor to these pages.

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rine took on a still darker cast, with incidents of officers and NCO's murdered, civilians abused and killed, drug addiction of epidemic proportions.

All this is part of the story told in *Everything We Had,* but the book is not only of American nightmares. Jonathan Polansky, a rifleman with the 101st Airborne Division, tells of a village destroyed, the inhabitants all killed by the Viet Cong because they were suspected of being American sympathizers. Robert Santos saw the bodies of civilians massacred by the North Vietnamese at Hue, corpses neatly lined up, thumbs tied behind their backs.

These men witnessed the communist ritual of the slaughter of innocents. So did Admiral William Lawrence, a Navy pilot who was shot down over North Vietnam in 1967 and spent nearly six years in captivity, including fourteen months of solitary confinement in a seven-foot-square cell: "They [the interrogators] would talk with you, give you a standard spiel and start asking you questions and then you'd say 'I'm only required to give name, rank, serial number and date of birth.' After asking you a couple of times, they left and sent the torturer in."

Admiral Lawrence's chapter is certainly the best in Santoli's collection. Lawrence was tortured, starved and kept isolated from his fellow prisoners by the North Vietnamese. Yet the captives devised an elaborate language of wall-tapping and coughing to communicate and thus help preserve their sanity. Lawrence taught himself to figure compound interest and write poetry in his head and remembered his poems when he was released.

Admiral Lawrence was freed in March of 1973, and he found his wife had divorced him to marry someone else. Yet, looking back, he is neither angry nor bitter about his ordeal. He repeats a proverb: "Bravery is not the absence of fear, it is the ability to keep going in the presence of fear." Admiral Lawrence is now superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy. He has recovered.

So have most of Santoli's interviewees. He has included brief "updates" of them, and we find nine writers and dramatists, seven businessmen, five lawyers, five social workers, a college professor, three military officers and two nurses. No details are given on Robert Rawls, a black GI from Cleveland, whose story is among the bitterest. Yet even he says that: "This was about the time that Huey Newton and all them was around. But for the guys in the bush the grunts, you know, one of my best friends was a white guy . . . You can't find no racism in the bush."

These people are pursuing careers that they only dreamed of while under fire in Vietnam. What aftereffects did they suffer that distinguish them from veterans of other wars? Certainly there is an abiding bitterness in some cases about the politicization of the Vietnam War. Dennis Morgan, a Marine aerial observer, tells how the North Vietnamese launched a massive attack on South Vietnamese marines at the Cua Viet River as soon as the ceasefire of January 28, 1973 took effect. However, U.S. air support had been "turned off" at the ceasefire. That is the kind of thing these people are talking about, the servile indifference of political and military authorities to what was happening in the field. Admiral Lawrence tells it best. "The thing that really made us get our hopes up was when the B-52's came in and bombed Hanoi. Christmas '72. That's when we knew that the attitude among the North Vietnamese had really changed. We could see it in the guards, in the officers we saw in camp. That B-52 bombing . . . they changed from cocky confidence to a desire to get the war over. I could see it. They were tired of fighting."

We do not know that bombing Hanoi in 1965 rather than 1972 would have shortened the war and saved lives on all sides. But it is worth considering, even in 1981. Certainly fewer infantrymen would have died. But bombing the enemy's homeland was a course of action relentlessly opposed by foes of the U.S. presence in Vietnam, who professed to be most saddened by the casualty lists. Of course, some of them were more upset by American battlefield successes than casualties. But what is most important in remembering the Vietnam War is that it became a political seesaw, and those in uniform saw the agonizing effects.

> ". . . there is something tedious about the experience of reading [*Everything We Had*]."
>
> —***New York Times***

> ". . . there is something oddly flat about the book, a kind of emptiness at its center."
>
> —***The Nation***

> "Santoli . . . subscribes to the greatest myth of all: American battlefield supremacy in Vietnam."
>
> —***The Progressive***

Santoli's book may be seen as a retrospective vindication of the war's opponents, but it is nothing of the sort. These thirty-three brave men and women shed tears for the bloodshed they witnessed, but also in anger and frustration at the appalling stupidity at the top, of those of their leaders who were afraid to protect their men, afraid to win. Further, *Everything We Had* is an eloquent testament to the pure *essence* of war, a close-up on experiences that cannot really be interpreted for noncombatants. But the effort to do so must be made. Santoli has limited his editing of the tapes, so the faulty grammar, the pauses and hesitations, the repetitiveness, but still, in a word,

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the truth—brims forth from these sometimes less-than-articulate people who open their souls. They tell about their tours in Vietnam, but tell us also about what we will always face in communist aggression and subversion in less-developed regions. The point is not that we should not take the field. It is that we should know how to go about winning. □

Chastened Liberals and Concerned Conservatives

Joseph A. Califano, Jr.: *Governing America: An Insider's Report from the White House and the Cabinet;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

Bill Boyarsky: *Ronald Reagan: His Life and Rise to the Presidency;* Random House; New York.

by James J. Thompson, Jr.

Fame and fortune await the publishing house willing to underwrite a venture that will become a milestone in publishing history. It should bear the title: *Encyclopedia of Dilapidated Liberals,* and its first volume must contain a long entry for "Califano, Joseph A., Jr.," a man who merits inclusion by virtue of his service to liberal causes over the past two decades. After an apprenticeship under Robert McNamara on the New Frontier, he moved into the White House as Lyndon Johnson's adviser on domestic affairs. In this capacity, he scurried back and forth between the White House and Capitol Hill carrying the bricks, mortar and blueprints used to construct the Great Society. After LBJ's downfall in 1968 Califano fled into exile, although, given the mild punishment Americans mete out to the lieutenants of discredited regimes, Califano's flight carried him no farther than a Washington, D.C. law firm. Here he plotted revenge against the Republicans and in his spare time raked in large amounts of money from a lucrative law practice. When Jimmy Carter called Califano after his victory in November of 1976 Califano snatched up the telephone and allowed as how, yes, he would like to be Secretary of HEW. As he told his friend Tip O'Neill: "I'd like to prove that HEW can be run, that those Great Society programs can work."

In his thirty months at HEW—the period recounted in *Governing America*—Califano frequently confirmed the worst fears of disbelievers in the Great Society's prospects and outdid himself in his efforts to earn their enmity. We all have our favorite atrocity stories from Califano's reign. Although an Italian Catholic, Califano displayed all the fanaticism of a born-again Southern Baptist in his comic-opera crusade against cigarette smokers. Like H. L. Mencken's ill-famed Puritan, the secretary tossed and turned at night, fearful that people might be enjoying themselves, in this case with a furtive puff on a Marlboro. Califano vowed to restore the federal government's flagging initiative in promoting civil rights, and restore he did, as he brought the University of North Carolina to Canossa over racial integration and placed the powers of his office at the beck and call of feminist crazies. On the issue of abortion he weasled his way—with helpful suggestions from two priests, both masters of Jesuitical speciousness—to a stance whereby he would maintain his personal opposition to abortion while faithfully upholding congressional enactments and judicial dictates. The partisans of reason slept easier when Jimmy Carter, in one of the few forceful acts of his woebegone Presidency, fired Califano in July of 1979.

Califano committed enough outrages in his thirty months in office to sate the appetite of even the most inveterate hater of HEW. If ever a man's actions gave substance to the argument for abolishing HEW altogether, Califano's did. Case closed. But is it? A referendum held only among unprejudiced voters to determine the fate of HEW would probably spell the demise of that department. With the exception of the Supreme Court, it has infuriated common-sense Americans more in the past twenty years than any other agency of the federal government. The basic problem lies not so much in the specific programs pushed by HEW—horrendous as some of them may be—but in the premises that lie at the heart of the department's operations. With its myriad programs that range widely across the fields of health, welfare and, until recently, education, the department claims the right to intrude into the lives of Americans in a way that would have been thought unconscionable twenty-five years ago. This intrusion saps the self-reliance, personal initiative, industriousness and self-discipline that have formed the bedrock of the American experience. HEW has too often condemned our virtues as vices and has sought to shame us out of those traits that have made of us a great people.

Despite his ineluctable liberalism, Califano would not entirely disagree with this analysis. Always more the pragmatic liberal than the narrow ideologue, his experience with HEW further schooled him in the limitations of government. If the gods have deigned to smile upon us for a change, Califano may represent a trend within liberalism that will lead to a chastening of liberal aspirations. The Kennedys and McGoverns will never slacken in their fervor, but Califano, for one, has learned some lessons and done some hard thinking.

Although Califano bemoans the fail-

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ure to enact the full liberal agenda, at times he fears that liberalism has been too successful already. How do we protect academic freedom from affirmative-action zealots? What happens to local control of public schools when the federal government moves in? What can be done to prevent welfare fraud? How can HEW be run more efficiently and less expensively? How can bureaucratic red tape be unsnarled? How can the federal government best work with the private sector to promote better health care? Can HEW resist the temptation to descend into the meddlesomeness that has made it so despised among millions of Americans? These questions would be expected of a conservative, but when they appear in *Governing America* one may be forgiven a bit of surprise. Make no mistake, though: hell will freeze over and Billy Carter will become well-mannered before Joseph Califano joins the philosophy of good sense. But at the very least, Califano represents a brand of thoughtful liberalism that had apparently gone the way of such phenomena as whores with hearts of gold.

Even the most begrudging praise of Califano will be lost on many American conservatives, for they remain imprisoned in the Social Darwinian world view of William Graham Sumner. In this dream world of atomistic individualism where the fit trample the unfit, there can be no truck with such men as Joseph Califano or such agencies as HEW. To hell with the weak! Or, as Sumner put it in 1883: ". . . Those whom humanitarians and philanthropists call the weak are the ones through whom the productive and conservative forces of society are wasted. They constantly neutralize and destroy the finest efforts of the wise and industrious, and are a dead-weight on the society in all its struggles to realize any better things." Given this view, it follows that HEW (now the Department of Health and Human Services) should be abolished, or at least reduced to a few perfunctory chores.

It constitutes heresy in certain con-

LIBERAL CULTURE

Speaking of Responsibility for the Word

A certain Mr. Gene Mater, described as senior vice president for policy of CBS Broadcast Group in New York, has been making speeches of late to various chapters of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences. These speeches have been eagerly reprinted, by the liberal dailies, as a sort of righteous and noble defense of freedom of expression. Here is a sample of how Mr. Mater's powerful mind works as he announces the truth:

> There are those who blame television for all societal ills, for crime in the streets, for immorality, for low reading scores in schools, for the high divorce rate—indeed, for everything except the common cold and bad weather.

Of course this elongated sentence makes one suspect that Mr. Mater is one whose talents at ratiocination are about equal to those of a less-gifted high-school student. No reasonable person blames television—that is, a giant heap of cables, wires, electronic gadgetry and technological whatnot—for the sociomoral disintegration of our reality which every American is witnessing and experiencing at every step these days. However, the ideas which are espoused by people who rule the American television and program its activities are certainly responsible for creating cultural climates—which, in turn, make this disintegration possible, so that crime, divorce rates and mental callousness flourish. Moreover, a good many Americans tend to believe that the people who rule television, Mr. Mater among them, refuse *any* responsibility for *any* influence television may have on society. As committed, even rabid, First Amendment twisters, they seem not to notice that by decrying as coercion appeals to self-restraint, they sound like cheap hypocrites. Their refusal to respect any

demand from the society at large, juxtaposed with the ignoble personal wealth of many TV executives, anchormen, celebs, etc. make them look, in the eyes of many Americans, like sleazy operators. By stubbornly and mendaciously claiming that they never, under any condition, create social problems but only mirror them, they slip down to the category of ordinary con men.

Some national academy. Some level of discourse.

A Gem of Logic

The New Yorker, that venerable organ of Madison Avenue gentry, has nothing but contempt for President Reagan—naturally. In one of its thoughtful (ponderous?) editorials, its *specialité de la maison,* one of *The New Yorker's* propagandists scoffs with impeccable elegance at the President's claim that we owe South Africa at least a little gratitude for having fought on our side in both world wars:

> Never mind that during the Second World War many of South Africa's future leaders were Nazi sympathizers.

Did South African soldiers die together with our own in the same trenches and tank battles or didn't they? History says they did. As to nazi sympathizers in post-war governments, what about East Germany? We wait in suspense for *The New Yorker* to print a single word about the family ties between the nazis and the Gestapo and that country's communist elite. *The New Yorker's* authors from the Institute of Policy Studies should have firsthand knowledge of such parentage. □

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servative circles to suggest that such a thing as the common good exists and that in a diverse and pluralistic society one must at times turn to the federal government to protect and nurture this common good. Well, if this be heresy then make the most of it, for conservatism cannot afford to tie itself to a Social Darwinian vision of a society composed of totally self-sufficient individuals. Conservatives who take this path doom themselves to irrelevance and, in effect, concede the fight to the liberals, who cleverly garb their socialistic public policies in humanitarianism and the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount.

Conservatives need to reclaim the high ground of humanitarianism from the liberals, forge a conservative social consciousness, curtail the excesses of liberal social policy and turn the Department of Health and Human Services into a humane and efficient agency, one that genuinely promotes the common good rather than the programs of groups who wish only to aggrandize their own narrow interests. To accomplish this will require the wisdom of Solomon, the courage of King David and the chutzpah of Moses, not to mention a pure heart and a sound body. Ronald Reagan may just have what it takes.

Bill Boyarsky's *Ronald Reagan: His Life and Rise to the Presidency* offers insight into the public and personal assets that President Reagan has brought to Washington. In contrast to Jimmy Carter—that Splendid Vacillator of recent American politics—Reagan possesses decisiveness and self-assurance born of his strength of character. Too often, those blessed with these characteristics evidence a certain insensitivity toward others. But in Reagan's handling of civil liberties while governor of California, Boyarsky discerns a trait that shows up elsewhere as well: "He was, in short, a humane and concerned man. . . ." The same could be said of Jimmy Carter, but that ill-starred Georgian lacked Reagan's sense of purpose and his willingness to act.

Conservatives may be startled to learn of Governor Reagan's refusal to support an antihomosexual measure aimed at schoolteachers in California. Here Reagan defied those who would define conservatism through key litmus tests. In opposing Proposition 6 Governor Reagan said: "What if an overwrought youngster disappointed by bad grades imagined it was the teacher's fault and struck out by accusing the teacher of advocating homosexuality? Innocent lives could be ruined." There speaks the voice of a thoughtful man who refuses to be squeezed into the procrustean bed of narrow ideology. Reagan's pragmatism—grounded upon principled conservatism—complements this refusal and enables him to move skillfully within our increasingly fragile political system. Knee-jerk conservatism is as tiresome and self-defeating as knee-jerk liberalism.

President Reagan believes firmly in self-reliance, industriousness, individual initiative and self-discipline. These traits have been battered by friend and foe alike in recent years. Conservatives have betrayed them by refusing to realize that these virtues must be combined with a humane regard for the unfortunate ones among us. Liberals have condemned them as viciously irrelevant in the urban, industrial America of today. Both are wrong, and with the aid of Boyarsky's book, I sense that Ronald Reagan understands the delicate balance between the individual and society, between self-reliance and the need to minister to those for whom reliance solely upon self means frustration and defeat. Ronald Reagan grew up in a small town in Illinois where the old-fashioned virtues were taken seriously, but he has also governed the state of California, a nation within a nation, that exhibits in microcosm the problems America faces today. As governor he promoted prison reform, balanced the claims of environmentalists with the need for economic development and sought to separate the permanently needy from those who simply required temporary aid. In the volatile area of race relations Boyarsky exonerates Reagan of complicity with the racism that has long crippled large segments of American conservatism.

Is Ronald Reagan the man for all seasons who can unite humaneness, toughmindedness and efficiency into a conservative social consciousness that will rout the chaotic liberal social policies of the last forty years? Let us hope so, for if President Reagan fails, Joseph Califano waits in the wings to take another shot at reviving the Great Society. And we have had enough of that. □

LIBERAL CULTURE

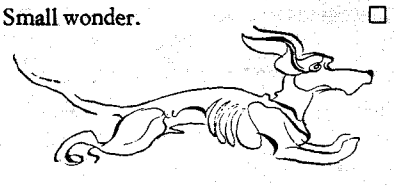
Injustice

UPI reports that the Library of Congress's national library service for the blind "is spending more than $100,000" of the taxpayers' money "to produce *Playboy* magazine in braille and distribute it free to the blind."

We consider this a blatant injustice. If *Playboy* is going to be made accessible in a more tactile form, why should the sightless be the only beneficiaries of the federal government's largess? The distinguished Librarian of Congress, Mr. Daniel Boorstin, explained:

> Of the more than 30 magazines available in braille form, Playboy is one of the most popular items . . .

Small wonder. □



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Permissive Muddle & Egalitarian Mugging

Philip Green: *The Pursuit of Inequality;* Pantheon Books; New York.

Maxine Schnall: *Limits: A Search for New Values;* Clarkson N. Potter; New York.

by John C. Caiazza

The West no less than China underwent a cultural revolution in the 60's, only ours took place not at the command of a central authority but as the result of the interaction of social forces and individual changes of attitude. The changes in the West were generational, the younger people who grew up in the 60's and 70's taking over from those who had grown up in the post-World War II decade. The cultural revolution took place across a broad range of areas —politics, law, religion, sexual mores and the status of women—but the thread that ran through all the changes was a demand that the world be made over instantly into a utopia where all inequities would be smoothed out and all constraints on the individual would be removed. What was demanded, it is important to note, was not freedom to go our own way independently of the law and social mores, but rather the active connivance of these agencies to make our lives full and everybody's status equal.

Now that that infantile rage has passed, it is time to assess the damage it left behind. In some cases, it is clear, the clock will be set back, in other cases it is not clear whether the clock can be set back, though it might be desirable; only in some limited areas is it apparent that the revolution brought improvement in people's lives. Maxine Schnall thinks that the changes in sexual mores wrought by the revolution were long overdue but are now overdone, and she has written an overlong but occasionally trenchant critique of the new morality as it directly affects people's lives. She is in favor of our placing limits on ourselves, but unfortunately she does not say where these limits will come from. Philip Green thinks that the political aims of the revolution were good and has written a bad-tempered polemic agains its critics, particularly those who saw fit to attack affirmative action and income redistribution. Like the Bourbons, he has forgotten nothing and learned nothing.

Women, supposedly the prime beneficiaries of the new sexual freedom, have instead become the prime victims of the cultural revolution. Whatever the advantages of a career may be, married women with careers now find that they must run their homes as well as do their jobs—which presents excessive demands on their time, their energies and often their marriages. Single women with careers find themselves vacillating between a swinging singles lifestyle that doesn't satisfy and is overglamorized and an incompletely repressed desire to settle down with one man and raise children. Most cruelly, the number of women with children and no husbands to support them has grown enormously. The new sexual freedom, supposedly of immeasurable benefit to legions of hitherto sexually repressed women, amounts simply to the exportation of the *Playboy* philosophy from the male to the female mode, which only makes it easier for men who want sex without responsibility to find it. This makes stable relationships between the sexes harder to establish, and the consequent damage to the psyches of women and men and children and to family life in general is now so well known that it has become undeniable. St. Therese of Lisieux once remarked that there were more women in heaven than men. The women's movement, in this as in so many areas, I fear, is equalizing matters, not by raising the brothers up to a higher standard, but by bringing the sisters down.

Maxine Schnall's life is typical of the times. She, as an unfulfilled housewife with both the desire and the evident talent to be a writer, broke away from her lifestyle (and eventually her marriage) to start a counseling center for housewives like herself and to write about the problems of contemporary women. Thus, her contact with the women's movement has been not only with its ideology but with its effects on real men and real women. She writes about her contacts and her conclusions in a book that is really a pastiche of fictionalized case studies, discussions of recent books and movies (e.g. *Looking for Mister Goodbar* and *Manhattan*), personal reminiscences and a schema that purports to show the changes in values as they have progressed according to decades (e.g. "The Revolutionary Sixties" and "The Selfish Seventies"). All these parts are joined by a prose that ranges unexpectedly from women's-mag emetic to near-Pascalian gnomic.

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Examples of the latter—"We soon discovered that promiscuity did not address the problem of dependence and, if anything, only underscored it. We began to see that it was not unrepressed lust that was causing us to lie down with perfect strangers, but terror. . . . We had liberated ourselves from blind obedience to past authority only to become a cultural police state ruled by our new peer group—the kids." While Ms. Schnall treats the problems brought about by the cultural revolution compassionately, she does not limit herself to its effects on the personal lives of men and women, but attempts to provide a solution for them. However, because she both accepts the premises of the revolution (that the old constraints of religion, tradition and family did damage to our true selves) and directly perceives the harm it has done, she cannot come to a coherent conclusion. She argues, therefore, that we should place limits on our behavior, yet denies the validity of any set of external rules that will set them for us.

At the heart of this book lies a contradiction that Ms. Schnall does not address—that is, once we have invalidated any external authority, how are we going to set our internal compasses? The human heart is notoriously self-serving and, given a chance to define the nature of its responsibilities completely bereft of external guides or any sense of external reality, will act to rationalize its own desires. Ms. Schnall knows this, yet she chooses to disregard it, hoping beyond hope that somehow, as they survey the damage, people will take it upon themselves to put their hearts and minds in order. I have the depressing sense that it will not happen unless we disregard Ms. Schnall's fear of traditional and external authorities.

The Pursuit of Inequality is Philip Green's response to the political reaction against the excesses of the cultural revolution. He is for the excesses—affirmative action, tight regulation of industry, income redistribution, lower standards of entry into schools and professions, the "War on Poverty"—and hence against the neoconservative swing in opposition. For Green, all the various signs of resistance to the political aspects of the cultural revolution can be characterized by one element: the desire of the opponents to preserve an old order of privilege and advantage—the defense, in a word, of inequality. Yet it is not so much the defense of inequality as opposition to egalitarian dogmas that characterizes contemporary conservatism, for if inequalities are part of the human condition, then much of the liberal and radical agenda cannot ever be completed. Lately, evidence of the intransigent nature of some kinds of inequalities is mounting, and apologists for social activism have their job cut out for them. Green provides plenty of argumentation, but only a moderate amount of evidence and little original thought in his analysis of the problem. For Green, it's as if the dislocations, trauma and inflation of the 70's never took place, as if there were no reason to re-examine these policies.

Green's approach to each of the topics he covers reveals the same strategy: take the evidence cited (e.g. IQ scores or the desire of a majority of Americans to resist government intrusion), reduce it from the order of objective reality

LIBERAL CULTURE

Mary Poppins's Equipment

That society cannot survive without myths is, since Bergson and Jung, a truism. Today we are learning that civilization—a much more complex notion than society—cannot continue without myths. That the chastity of Mary Poppins is a myth, we knew all along. Yet a certain warmth and coziness of *our* civilization would be missing without this legend. That Mary Poppins must have had some mammary equipment we always knew. But somehow *not* to mention it was a sort of heartrending glory that somehow made us better—if only for a little while. Now, in a movie entitled *SOB,* Julie Andrews—who has been associated for more than a decade with the Mary Poppins image—bares her bosom (for reasons of art, sincerity, progressivism). There's something inexpressibly sluttish in that act, and no feminist rhetoric or revolutionary dialectics will erase our feeling that Ms. Andrews's joyhouse manners are unredeemable by lofty doctrines or so-called moral audacity. Ms. Andrews got paid for her "work," or "art," and for many of us it is as if Mary Poppins decided to take a job at a massage parlor for the simplest of reasons.

The Powers That Be

Parade, America's most trusted (by its own self-assessment) Sunday magazine, informs its spiritually elevated readership:

> According to Dean Norman K. Wessells of the Stanford University School of Humanities and Sciences, groups such as the Moral Majority are potentially far more dangerous than, say, the U.S. Communist Party.

In keeping with *Parade's* standards of expectations for an intellectual response, all we can say is "Oh, Gee!" □

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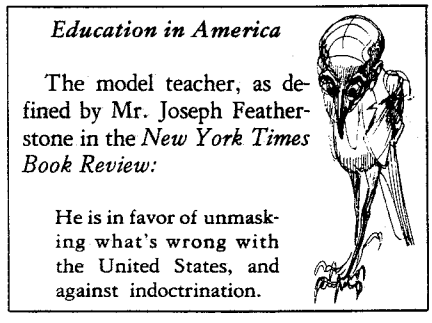
to the order of subjective perception (thus, IQ scores tell us nothing about intelligence because intelligence itself refers to many more things than the ability to do well on objective tests, while poll results depend on the questions the pollsters ask), then assert that the state ought to reconstitute social reality along egalitarian lines and claim that opponents of this policy have only their own self-interest at heart. This strategy keeps the need for demonstrating intimate knowledge of the issues to a minimum by disguising the lack of knowledge behind a drumfire of polemic. The point here is not that the evidence Green is examining cannot be questioned, especially that concerning comparative IQ levels, but that the issues are complex and need reasoned analysis, not just sustained polemic.

Andrew Hacker has written in the *New York Review of Books,* "Genetic inheritance has always appealed to the conservatives, who invoke it without apology . . . Perhaps it is a hidden fear of the left that, on this count at least, the right could just be right." Yet the issue is not only whether inequality is the result of genetic structure or some cultural determinant, though that is the one that engages most participants in the debate. The issue for the 80's is to what extent can and should the federal government use its coercive powers—not just to enforce equal rights under the law, but to enforce an actual degree of uniformity of class and economic status. The fact is that a decade or more of government attempts to enforce an equality of condition have failed, and that is what is responsible for the rise of a counterrevolution. But along with political opposition comes an attempt to explain why the policy of enforced equality has failed, which is why consideration is now being given to evidence from biology and sociology that was ignored before. That is something that concerns liberals, conservatives and anyone else who wants to understand the limits of both the power and authority of government. The new interest in explanations of inequality has come about as a result of the failure to enforce a real condition of equality and is apparent on the left as well as the right.

Green does not see the arguments of his opponents as explanations, however, but only as rationalizations, and this makes his book a failure. He fails not only because he relies overmuch on polemic, but also because he has nothing new to say. Above all, Green fails because of his Marxism. That Green is a Marxist is indicated by his many references to him and the easy, almost automatic way in which he uses Marx's thought as a touchstone of social reality. How old-fashioned Marx's theories are and how inapplicable to the conditions of the late 20th century are highlighted by Green's book. No mention is made of the middle class, for example, nor is any knowledge of modern management or production techniques revealed; Green writes the way Marx did, as if there were only robber-baron capitalists and oppressed factory workers performing mindless tasks in horrid conditions. Marxism has always been a polemicist's philosophy, full of anger and self-righteousness, but in the old days, at least, you could expect a real if biased knowledge of current economic processes. Reality has outgrown Marx's philosophy, however, and Green has not updated it. Without its theoretical underpinnings intact, all that is left of Marxism is spite, something that can be seen in the way that Green treats his opponents.

It is not enough, for example, to try to demolish the arguments of Milton Friedman; Friedman himself must be destroyed. Thus Friedman (and anyone else with whom Green disagrees), is not respected as a scholar or as a man; his motives are brought under attack—as if one who opposes socialism must be in the pay of Standard Oil. If I seem to exaggerate, let me quote: the issue, believe it or not, is a distinction Friedman has made between the state's preserving


Education in America
The model teacher, as defined by Mr. Joseph Featherstone in the *New York Times Book Review:*
He is in favor of unmasking what's wrong with the United States, and against indoctrination.

"law and order" and "protecting our freedom . . . from our fellow citizens." Green's conclusion: "The whole phraseology thus reeks of the Star Chamber, the witch-hunt, the repressive apparatus of loyalty-security programs, and the secret police with their Red Squads." There is more, a page and a half, in fact. Milton Friedman, of all people, perhaps the gentlest economist around in his public utterances; Friedman who, despite Green's disclaimer, is indeed known as a "friend of liberty"; Friedman who, in his PBS television series, concluded each program with an open discussion with his critics. Would Green have done as much?

One of the advantages of adopting the Marxist position is that it allows you to dismiss your opponents without considering their arguments. Marx's theory of *ideology* is the mechanism here, for it propounds that an economic structure, capitalism in this case, will promote its own justification or ideology. Those who hold it may sincerely believe it, yet it is still just a rationalization of the corrupt means by which capitalists oppress the workers. Marxists have always argued this way, and Green employs the technique to the hilt, for what need is there to take such ideas seriously, as if they had any basis in objective reality? Their only significance is that acceptance of them blocks progressive reform. Of course, this method of avoiding the thrust of your opponents' ideas cuts two ways. If the rational defense of capitalism can be seen as one class's justification for exploiting another, so too can Marxist and leftist critiques of Western culture

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in general be seen as "the knowledge class's" justification for maintaining itself in a position of authority in the media, the government and academe. This fact particularly annoys Green:

> Thus Kristol stands history on its head with a vengeance—but not without purpose. What he has done, in sum, is to attribute the destructive element of capitalist development . . . to an allegedly adversary class of intellectuals—a tactic borrowed from Daniel Bell . . . This is the purpose of the new inegalitarians; to discredit the very source of egalitarianism itself.

It must be very difficult, after all, to have a trick you have used for years against your opponents suddenly turned and used against yourself. □

The Jewish Ideological Mystique

Elie Wiesel: *The Testament;* Summit Books; New York.

by Will Morrisey

Solzhenitsyn speaks for the Russia Lenin crushed but could not kill: the Russia of czarism and the Orthodox Church. He does not, cannot, speak for the old Russian underground. Solzhenitsyn's master, Dostoyevsky, speaks of, if not for, part of that underground, the part that dreamed of democracy, or socialism. Neither can speak for the other part of the underground, the only international nation: the Jews.

For years some Jews allied themselves with the secular underground. The enemy of my enemy is my friend, they were taught, and enemies were never scarce. Still, an unusually large number of Jews not only allied themselves with socialism, particularly communism, but —to use apt religious language—converted to it. Why?

Stalin took the precaution of murdering anyone who could have answered. Elie Wiesel, one of the best *Jewish* writers alive (there are reasons why he will not regard that designation as condescending), undertakes to speak for the dead, to re-member the Russian Jewishness that Stalin tried to dismember.

The Testament begins in Israel. Wiesel, himself a minor character in the novel, watches Soviet Jews arrive at Lod Airport in July, 1972. From "the realm of silence and fear" they enter Israel silently and fearfully. But memory, memory of lovers, family, and (true) comrades fast overcomes silence and fear. Soon they can laugh and weep, toast life, the future, peace—perhaps their first free expression of feeling in a lifetime of enforced guardedness.

Wiesel sees a young man who does not participate. He is a mute, the son of Paltiel Gerhsonovich Kossover, a poet "liquidated" by Stalin some twenty years before. Taken back to Wiesel's apartment, he insists on staying awake all night; it will transpire that he wants to write his father's memoir, his *Testament,* from memory.

Soviet communism, Judaism, travel (or, as is said of Jews, wandering), silence, fear, memory, reunion, love, family, friendship, laughter, life, the future, peace, freedom, poetry: Wiesel presents his themes in the brief prologue. In Paltiel Kossover's letter to his son, which follows the prologue, we learn the poet's teachings on some of these themes. "[T]he very essence of the noble tradition of Judaism" consists of a kind of universal memory system, the Book of Creation wherein "all our actions are inscribed." Memory serves Creation, life (and therefore the future) because without it there is only oblivion. And although Paltiel Kossover does "not know what life is" and will "die without knowing," he knows that communism, in exacting selective amnesia, does not serve life. "Don't follow the path I took," he tells his son, "it doesn't lead to truth."

> Truth, for a Jew, is to dwell among his brothers. Link your destiny to that of your people; otherwise you will surely reach an impasse.

"I lived a Communist and I die a Jew"; having lived, inadvertently, for death, he dies for life—a theme on which Christians have no monopoly.

The remainder of the book explores the subtleties of the themes, the gaining of the teachings. Wiesel juxtaposes short chapters concerning Paltiel Kossover's son—especially his recovery of his father's memoir—with sections of the *Testament,* the story of a Jew wandering from his native city in Russia and the faith he learned there to Romania during the First World War, Berlin in the 20's, Paris in the 30's, briefly to Palestine and then to Spain during the civil war, to Moscow during the Second World War and finally back to his native city, the prison there and to Jewishness.

All Jews "were victims of fear" during Paltiel Kossover's childhood in Russia. There was fear of stern teachers—a fear that led to knowledge, something to love—and fear of Christians and their pogroms, which led neither to knowledge nor to love. His mother's songs (the source of his poetic nature?) soothed the fear of teachers, but the only immediate remedy for the fear of death at Christian hands was silence: the Kossover family hid beneath the floor of the barn while murdering toughs shrieked "Death to the Jews!" Throughout *The Testament,* silence means both torture and salvation—contrasting with speech, which means both the babbling of false prophets and the poetry of true ones.

The move to Romania brought no real uprooting, for "Jews remain Jews

Mr. Morrisey is associate editor of Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy.

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"Through publications such as the *Chronicles of Culture*, the Institute has demonstrated the importance of the literary world to contemporary thinking. You are to be commended for articulating and encouraging a cultural perspective based on the enduring values of American life."

Ronald Reagan

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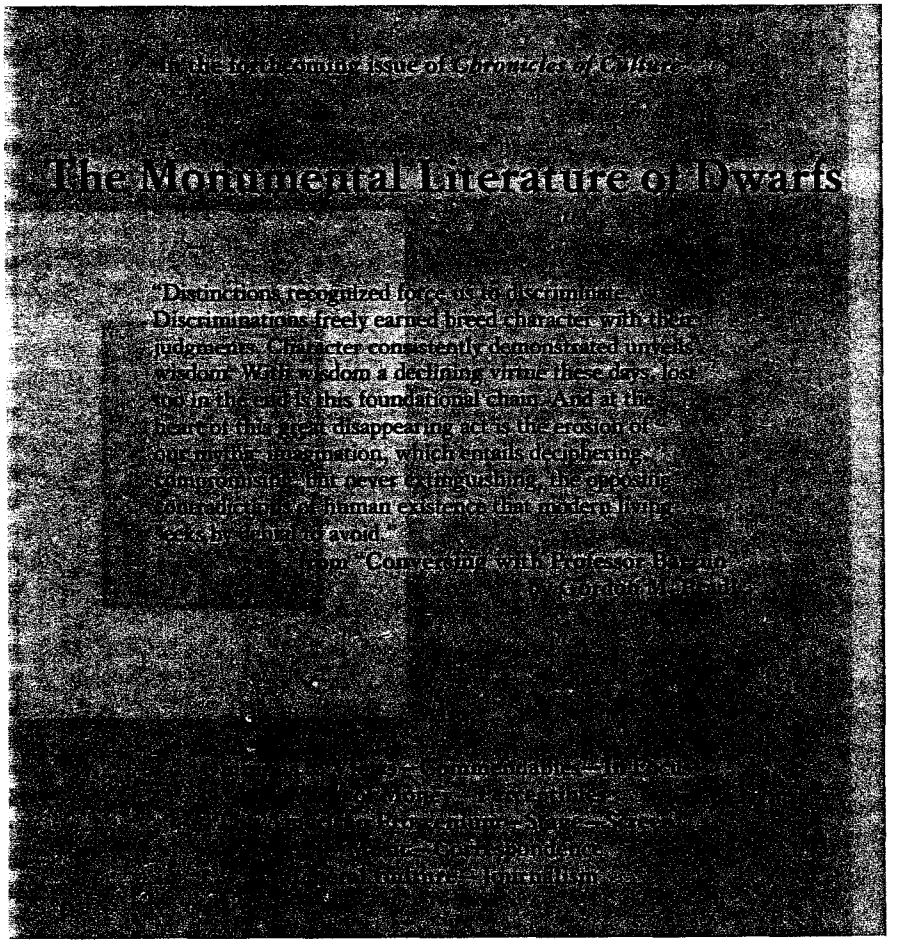
wherever they are: united, charitable, hospitable," part of "a timeless community" without geographical boundaries. Yet these aspects of Judaism led Paltiel Kossover away from Judaism, for he saw the suffering of the poor and wanted to relieve it. Jewish messianism fascinated him; it also prepared him for communism. Fortune intervened in the shape of a fellow student, "a master at the seduction and corruption of the mind," who introduced him to Marxist political action and thought, not only as an expression of the will to justice but as a vehicle of the friendship Paltiel craved.

Wiesel's most skillful writing arises from his perception that most human beings, even intelligent ones, enact contradictory ideas and feelings while remaining quite decent and only a bit guilt-ridden. Despite his partial conversion to Marxism, on the eve of his departure for Berlin (he wanted to evade Romanian conscription), Paltiel sincerely *and* doubtfully promised his father to remain a Jew. And in Berlin, further seduced by a nubile young communist who lectured him, in bed, on Darwin and historical materialism, he continued to pray, albeit surreptitiously. Only after intense action—a street fight with nazis—and his girlfriend's ensuing care did he forget his observances for the first time. (Forgetting: few of the great modern antireligious philosophers believed they could induce men to reject God, but they knew that a certain kind of life, a life of activity in and for this world, might induce men to forget God.)

The triumph of nazism in 1932, a triumph Berlin's communist prophets failed to predict, eventually led Paltiel Kossover to Paris. He met two remarkable men: the mysterious David Aboulesia, a wanderer searching for the Messiah, and Paul Hamburger, a brilliant Jewish communist intellectual and organizer. Hamburger saw, as Paltiel did not, that the Moscow trials must involve a grotesque betrayal of the revolution. Before he obeyed Stalin's order to return to Moscow, he told Paltiel to get out of Paris, to go to Spain.

Describing the brutality of both sides in the civil war, Paltiel reflects that the Jews fighting there did not share in it. "If the Spaniards massacred one another, if they set their country on fire and bled it, it is because, in 1492, they burned or drove away their Jews," leaving no moderating sense of humaneness in Spain. Jews who were engaged in the internecine struggles on the left developed split personalities; when Paltiel inquired after a friend who had disappeared, a Jewish communist who worked for the security forces offered the Party line in French, sympathy in Yiddish.

Despite such incidents, Paltiel Kossover returned not to his family in Romania but to the Soviet Union, which he still believed was the messianic country. Upon his arrival, another security man warned him not to talk too much because "a past is only cumbersome." Memory, Jewishness, speech: "You're not at the yeshiva here, young man," a member of the Jewish Writer's Club in Moscow told him. "Don't force us to listen to things that must not be heard." Hitler invaded before the authorities got around to silencing the annoying poet. During the war, Paltiel revealed himself as one of those persons, uncommon but not rare, whose timidity in ordinary life gives way to courage when it matters. Unfit for military service, he displayed heroism as a stretcher-bearer — typically, he seems not to see his own heroism even as he



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writes about himself years later.

It is easy to forget in Moscow. Paltiel married the woman who would give him his only son, and he stayed in Stalin's Russia, ally of the new Israel, after the war. Wiesel depicts neither evil nor stupidity here—simply life, ordinary life with its conveniences and compromises, overcoming memory.

Stalin, however, preferred extraordinary life for his subjects. The Party line changed, and "a new-style pogrom" began, directed against Jewish writers.

> I could not accept that the Party could condemn an entire culture, annihilate an entire literature. . . . Why attack a language? Why would anyone wish to exterminate Yiddish?

Returning to his native city, Paltiel Kossover also returned to Judaism before his inevitable arrest and torture. Sustained by his memory of family (particularly his father and his son) and friends, he overcame the fear that began in childhood in this city with some, if not all, of the faith he learned there and was punished for there, at the beginning and the end of his life. He answered his own question of the Party in words he spoke before his executioner's bullet could silence him: "You must understand," he told a jailer, "the language of a people is its memory"; totalitarianism, as Orwell knew, as Solzhenitsyn knows, finds memory radically inconvenient. It therefore permits only its own constantly manipulated antilanguage.

What could Solzhenitsyn say to Paltiel Kossover? For the most part he is silent on the Jews. His Russia mistreated Jews before Stalin did—less systematically, it is true, but the fact remains. The wanderer David Aboulesia tells Paltiel, "if you believe you must forsake your brothers to save mankind, you will save nobody, you will not even save yourself." He speaks against the communists, of course. But what of the Christ Solzhenitsyn reveres? Beyond the dialogue between international Judaism and international communism, we hear the dialogue between the Jewish nation and the Christian nations. And beyond it we hear another dialogue: the dialogue between Jesus and his fellow Jews. Is there a writer today who can renew it? □

Politics Versus Reason

Margaret Canovan: *Populism;* Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich; New York.

Ellen Willis: *Beginning to See the Light;* Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

by Edward J. Lynch

Historicism is one technique of studying the past that refuses to examine the particulars. The historicist ignores the individuals who played parts in events and attempts to depict the phenomena being studied as the result of various "historical forces," mostly the social and economic conditions surrounding the topic being considered. Marxism offers one of the paradigmatic cases of historicism, with its originator's faith that all of history is determined by an inevitable progress of economic clashes.

Margaret Canovan and Ellen Willis give us somewhat neutered versions of history in the process of demonstrating the inadequacies of historicism. Both float around political questions, although their tomes presuppose answers to all legitimately political questions. Both volumes are products of prestigious publishing houses and reflect dogmas that dominate fashionable American circles. They look at different aspects of our past, but still leave us in touch with the modern spirit of leftism.

Margaret Canovan's exercise fits into that category commonly called the "history of ideas," although an idea is the last thing that would ever penetrate her ivy-bound mind. Her book is a catalogue of the different forms of life that have been dubbed "populist" over the last century or so, accompanied by a survey of the characteristics that enable each of these phenomena to fit into the general form. The result is described more properly as a list than as a book, salvaged only by means of a concluding chapter in which the author groups several characteristics that have been shared by all claimants to the name "populist."

Professor Canovan sustains an august, learned tone throughout the essay and refuses to descend to the sometimes crude stances taken by her subjects. Teddy Roosevelt once noted of the Southern populist, "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman, that the hallmark of his wardrobe was that he never wore an overcoat or an undershirt. Margaret Canovan never noticed that trait, nor does she pick up any other characteristic that might have given her subject life. One leaves the volume with no sense of the oratorical tone of William Jennings Bryan, and even less idea of anything that he had to say. The book is written as if ideas did not matter, especially any critical consideration of them. What ideas hold populism together? Are the populists' cries against monied interests the result of rational economic calculations, or are they the unreasoned ravings of people whose minds are too small to comprehend a complex world? She clearly favors some kinds of populists (the ones she labels "progressives") over others (whom she labels "reactionaries," and combines into lists, such as: Huey Long, Hitler, de Gaulle and George Wallace). The analytical framework that enables the author to appoint one contingent as the forces of "prog-

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ress" is never explained, and the reader will find that omission unfortunate.

Ellen Willis cannot be accused of leaving dead prose on the page. Her words sparkle with the vibrancy of one arguing wholeheartedly for her cause. Only after reading this prose does one fully understand that the message is deathly.

Ms. Willis engages in an intellectual embrace with vulgar Marxism. She is aware of material forces at work in history and retains the faith that eventually a society free from bondage based on sex or class will surface as the true direction of progress. Because even vulgar Marxism requires that one acknowledge the inevitable working out of these historical forces, it does not permit a role for the individual intellect. In historicist systems, each of us is determined by slightly different social and cultural forces, and we can never fully understand or communicate our "determinants" to others. Ellen Willis superbly demonstrates this incapacity for communication.

One comes to understand how Ms. Willis is supposed to think as she enumerates the historical forces that have shaped her life. Her parents are middle-class Jews living in New York and imbued with the liberalism that these identifications imply. She was one of three children who attended appropriately New York Jewish schools. In the process of becoming secularized, religion came to mean less and less to the entire family, which placed great emphasis upon intellect, especially "critical intellect." The children were raised during the formative events of the 1960's: protests, the folk culture, the rock culture, various forms of jazz, a bit of art and literary faddishness to accompany the musical faddishness and a touch of the liberated cultures in sex and drugs.

Ms. Willis emerged from this socialization with all the traits that fall in the stereotypic profile of a *Village Voice* columnist. She has been married and divorced twice and has had two other fleeting affairs (the reader is left to imagine for himself the sex of the partners on these occasions). She has smoked a few things in wrappers not intended for tobacco, popped a few pills that were not prescribed by her doctor and enjoyed her share of assorted beverages on the chablis-and-brie circuit. She crusades for "relevant" causes. The essays from her early period are guided by the folk themes of the music of Bob Dylan, but she has managed to drift with other cult figures since that Minnesota troubadour found religion. Historicists would acknowledge the woman as a perfect product of her culture.

"Willis's insistence on hedonism as the center of a sane life is perhaps her most engaging quality . . ."

—*The New Republic*

"She is also unfailingly honest."

—*New York Times Book Review*

The author has a major problem, however. As culturally determined as she is, her brother somehow turned out differently. His mind, apparently more intellectual and critical than her own sterling cerebellum, has drifted from Dylan to Israel. He has taken up the study of the sacred Hebrew texts that the Jewish people have used for centuries as guides for their lives. After an examination of his own life in light of the commands contained in those books, her brother has become a very conservative Jew. Perhaps insufficiently grounded in the deeper technicalities of Marxist analysis, the author overlooks dialectics and heads off to Israel to see what is going on in her brother's life.

Her experience in Israel actually frightens Ms. Willis. She encounters not only her newly serene brother, but a good number of his friends, including several women, who do not look upon the Biblical regimen as an obsolete form of enslavement. Somehow she recognizes that her brother is now capable of facing *his* emotional problems, whatever they are. The vastly different cultural conditions do not have a corresponding effect on Ms. Willis, however. Whatever she encounters is evaluated in terms of the changes it might cause in her career as a writer for the New York chic set. Firmly anchored in the floating type of the *Village Voice,* the author returns to her native cultural condition to resume her assault on modern sensibilities.

One of Ms. Willis's predictable concerns is for the extension of abortion rights. The author has decided that the fetus and the woman bearing that fetus are somehow incompatible. Rather than a relationship in which both beings grow, pregnancy is a war for survival. After nine months of this struggle, apparently only one of the beings will remain alive. Pregnancy, in this view, is an assault on the woman bearing the child. Accordingly, abortion becomes, within her common-law jurisprudence, always justifiable as an act of self-defense. No claims on the part of the child are entertainable until the new baby is able to enter them on its own.

Positions of this scope are nothing less than the lunatic rantings of a being with no moral compass. Ms. Willis is indignant that no one has given her an adequate response to her argument. But adequate response in any political argument requires an open mind on the part of one who might be persuaded. Ms. Willis's mind has been culturally conditioned, by her own admission. Her experience in Israel demonstrates that she is simply unwilling to reconsider the premises that give her direction.

Ellen Willis and Margaret Canovan, then, present two faces of the poverty of historical thought in modern society. Seeking the social and cultural condi-

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Pssst . . .

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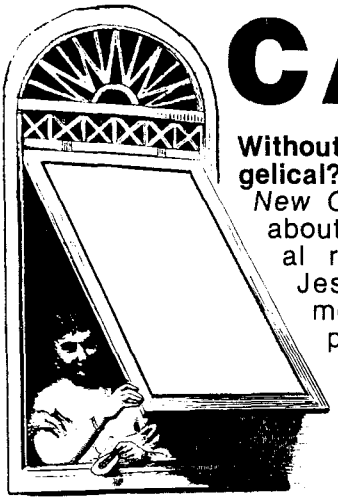

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tions that give rise to political movements, they deny the possibility of the discussion of ideas necessary for political philosophy. The general directions of "progress" and "reaction" are givens, defined for them by "history." Their books serve as reportage of movement along the continuum. When they transcend the torpor of this reportage, they act as agents of the *Zeitgeist* among us.

Political philosophy, in contrast, is the serious and critical consideration of the nature of the good life. The discipline is involved in the discussion of ideas by people who concede the capacity of human beings for rational thought. Politics is the consideration of whose vision of the good life shall prevail over the activities of the community. As a consequence of its denial of the possibility of political philosophy, the historicism of these volumes also denies the possibility that politics might be guided by reason. The dronings of Margaret Canovan demonstrate, for those who retained a bit of doubt, that populism is a political aberration that lacks respectable intellectual moorings and has no serious vision of a decent political order. From the newspapers of the last five years, one would conclude that the social and political forces that produced Ellen Willis have been superseded by other forces that are now operating in political life. One trusts that the new politics will include an antidote for the unreasoned vision that has been her guiding light. □

Pathological Chic

Alexandra Marshall: *Tender Offer;* Alfred A. Knopf; New York.

John Givens: *Living Alone;* Atheneum Publishers; New York.

by Betsy Clarke

After her divorce and with two small children, Phoebe Newcomb turned $1.16, her fudge recipe and her own hard work into Phoebe's Fudge, Inc., a multimillion-dollar publicly owned corporation. The *Tender Offer* heroine achieved her success without the Equal Rights Amendment, without federally funded day care and without any reported intervention by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Furthermore, thanks to her benevolent capitalist spirit, she has staved off unions in her two factories by providing her employees with Olympic-sized swimming pools, representation on her board of directors and Stevie Wonder tapes during working hours. In hiring, this tycoon's tastes run to women and Spanish-surnamed Americans, all without government pressure.

Question: has Phoebe Newcomb been reading *Wealth and Poverty?* Evidently not. As American logic would have it, Phoebe's politics lean to limousine liberal. Author Alexandra Marshall writes, "Phoebe couldn't vote . . . Republican." Too bad. The Connecticut resident might have found a soul mate in her Republican Senator Lowell Weicker. But principles are principles, after all.

Phoebe now wears designer clothes, travels first class, plans trips around the world and is soon to marry one of America's leading designers of women's clothing. She has two healthy, independent children. Now giant Synthetic Technologies Corporation (Syncorp) is offering Phoebe's Fudge shareholders a substantial profit in the sale of their securities in order to effect a merger. Syncorp's maneuver threatens to bring Phoebe even more wealth than she has already acquired. Will nothing go right in her life?

For Phoebe is unhappy about the "raid." The issue, as it always is with these people, is "freedom of choice," though Phoebe remains oblivious to the fact that choice is precisely what a tender offer provides. Phoebe coins the slogan "Yes to saying no" and begins waging a media war (successful, naturally) against Syncorp with it, delirious with pride at her cleverness. No explanation is given as to why that slogan should have preference over, for example, "no to saying yes." Or how about just plain "no"?

Here's the real worry: Phoebe's Fudge consists entirely of natural ingredients and Syncorp is rumored to manufacture products used in space exploration. Why such merchandise necessarily relegates Syncorp to the ranks of Attila the Hun is unclear, since it is demonstrably difficult to travel to Phoebe's favorite vacation spot, Antigua, in a hot-fudge sundae. However, Phoebe is planning an advertising campaign for her new Weebie, "the Hershey's Kiss of fudge," and the likes of Gloria Steinem, Lily Tomlin and Robert Redford will be endorsing it. Benjamin Spock will be featured in the ads wearing a "No Nukes" button, evi-

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dently eschewing atomic holocaust for the more languid destructions of obesity and tooth decay. "Phoebe knew only one thing, which was that those . . . people wouldn't endorse a product made by Synthetic Technologies Corporation, and she'd have to cancel the campaign." It is curious that Gloria Steinem is portrayed as concerned with the natural order against encroaching technology. Does she think that suction machines grow on trees?

Equally troubling to Phoebe, who has been known to pollute her body with martinis and Lucky Strikes, are the lives of her children. Despite a Ph.D., her pregnant daughter Alice is showing signs of wishing to raise her own child in her own home. By contrast, son Roger is out of Phoebe's grace for not devoting enough time to his son.

Phoebe's relationship with the state of Texas has also hit the skids: "She'd never liked Texas, not even when she was nearly its neighbor growing up in Arizona, and Dallas made it definite by letting an assassin live there."

Submerged in all this pathology are the women's independence theme, the employer-employee theme, the parent-child theme, and the anti-Richard Nixon theme. Barely mentioned is Dwight Newcomb, Phoebe's ex-husband, who courageously bailed out of the marriage as fast as he could. According to the novel, he now lives a normal life in the New York City area. We should have learned more about Dwight. He would be the one with the story to tell.

John Givens, in *Living Alone,* has tried to satirize self-indulgent life in Southern California. This mission, while noble, is hardly the most difficult in the world. To succeed, an author needs an ear for the currently fashionable nonsense, the ability to spot a charlatan and a killer instinct. By these criteria, Mr. Givens has produced a disappointing, even cowardly, work.

The focus of the novel is a casual, narcissistic group of weirdos who sleep together, smoke dope and carry firearms to their parties. Narrating the scenes is an unidentified divorced man living alone but looking for affection. He remains friendly with his ex-wife, but believes himself to be in love with Blythe, a self-obsessed model with problems of her own: "Daily life troubled Blythe. The medication she took to relieve anxiety made her torpid. This depressed her. The medication that lightened her depression made her nauseous, and that which settled her stomach left her nervous and apprehensive."

During the course of this novel, the narrator visits his trendy therapist, Ms. Bismark, who is alternately tuning up her motorcycle, sleeping or skindiving during their sessions. He beds the nurse who cares for his aunt at a sanitarium, and near the end of the novel an asthmatic fellow party guest shoots him in the chest.

The problem is that, for all the activity, Mr. Givens has not provided us with a single reason why any of these people or their pastimes should matter to us. The world is full of crazies. It always has been and it always will be. Other than acknowledging this unalterable state of affairs as regrettable, what difference does it make?

For Mr. Givens has failed to integrate any of these people into our society. None of them seems to hold a job or go to school or even run out for groceries. The author has chosen a target for his satire, therefore, that does not really exist. Even if such a group did exist, due to its patterns of living it would be in no position to infect the rest of our culture.

A different narrator could have saved this novel. In a Woody Allen movie, the point of view is from a sympathetic character: the audience's representative in the author's artifice. Though too susceptible to peer pressure, perhaps, he nevertheless possesses basically good instincts. In the end, he would be unable to join this group or, alternatively, be finally destroyed by it. But here the narrator is exceptionally weak, obtuse and uninteresting. Who cares whether he is corrupted or not? Of the preoccupied Ms. Bismark, he says, "She was a wonderful therapist."

" 'Living Alone' exhibits an almost perfect union of talent and subject. Givens is a brilliant satirist . . ."

—*Chicago Tribune*

Likewise it is difficult to see what emotional involvement could develop between the narrator and Blythe. Woody Allen would not have spent three minutes with either of them.

Not that there aren't a few gems. To the woman who pumped his chest full of lead, the narrator says, "I'm sorry you shot me." How often are crime's victims expected to apologize to its perpetrators! His description of the clothing designers' new "Numb Look" is also well done. "Day wear would be unsympathetic to the plight of others. The old accessories would be replaced by cool new ones reflecting a sense of high tech callousness. Evening wear would span the gamut from indifference to outright hostility."

But too much of the book is stale comedy:

> 'What's wrong with that?' A commercial had appeared featuring people dressed like pieces of dancing fruit.
>
> 'It doesn't hold your attention.'
>
> 'What doesn't?'

Worse, Mr. Givens seems peculiarly reluctant to push his point. For the truth is that the people he describes have climbed out of their swimming pools and into seats in universities, the media and the professions where they are actually doing some damage. Anyone who doubts it has only to read *Tender Offer,* which is, though unintentionally, the better satire. □

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Liberal Decadence & Third World Fanaticism

Shiva Naipaul: *Journey to Nowhere;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Henry L. Mason III

This is a book about Jonestown, and anyone who thinks that Jonestown is an unpromising subject for cultural analysis had better think again: in Naipaul's hands the story of the Guyana suicides becomes a grisly example of the intellectual cancer caused by left-wing "thought." Naipaul is also a master of acid irony which is all the more devastating for being consistently understated.

The book is formally divided into two parts. The first describes Naipaul's investigations in Guyana, a society reverting to primitivism under a miasma of Marxist rhetoric. Its rulers are completely incapable of halting the country's collapse:

> [T]he golf course, a relic of the displaced planter regime, was set amidst the cane fields. Before the sugar estates were nationalized, the road leading to it had been well maintained. Since then, nature had been given a free hand . . ., and its deterioration had been swift. Golf and those who played it had no place in a society that was moving inexorably toward socialism. . . . The clubhouse was a modest wooden pavilion. Gathered here with their aging cars and their children (nearly all the children were infants: most of the older ones were safely abroad) were the remnants of the Guyanese middle class. Ruined people in a ruined setting, seeking after pleasures which could no longer be found, pretending to enjoy themselves.

The explanation for the collapse is not hard to find. The entire society is awash in Third World slogans which, like bad money, are not only useless in themselves but drive out all attempts to deal rationally with the country's problems. Even the declining political "opposition" is infected and can offer no criticism of the ruling party except for the sterile charge that it is "pseudo-socialist":

> They had, I was saddened to see, become part of the Guyanese futility, prisoners locked up beyond hope of rescue in the cages wrought by their Marxist ideology. Fifteen years of useless battle had taught them nothing, leading only to staleness and stagnation, to the interminable repetition of bankrupt formulas. . . . They inhabited a make-believe world, a sort of Marxist dollhouse, populated by Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. . . . The parroting of textbook abuse and textbook hope was worse than pointless. It was worse than pointless because it created false pictures; because the words described nothing that existed and could only lead Guyana further and further away from any understanding of its condition.

Into this society came Jones and his followers, "espousing a mixture of socialism, brotherhood and cooperative agricultural enterprise—the stated ideals, in short, of the Guyanese government." Jonestown also was ruled by a "Third World" mentality, which manifested itself in paranoid denunciations of imaginary persecutions together with megalomaniac claims of progress and harmony:

> Each tiny act [was] ruthlessly magnified. That magnification was necessary: it concealed the paucity and ordinariness of their own achievements.

The grimmest aspect of Naipaul's analysis, however, is neither his description of Guyana nor his account of Jonestown itself. Far more chilling are the outside observers who, confronted by unreason in its starkest forms, made eager obeisance to it as a model of enlightenment. In Jamaica, for example, the "matted hair illiterates" who babble the inane dogmas of the Rastafarian cult are extolled by a Catholic priest as possessing a "critique of bourgeois society which has much in common with that of the genuinely revolutionary political forces." And in the same way Jim Jones accumulated numerous testimonials from political and religious leaders in the United States. A Baptist pastor wrote to the Prime Minister of Guyana:

> '[L]ove of one's brother and sister,

Mr. Mason is an attorney in Chicago.

Radical Misogyny

Male chauvinism rears its head in the very citadel of enlightenment. Here's how *The Nation* demonstrates that it actually is a bulwark of misogyny:

For the highest court in the land he [President Reagan] has picked a person, barely qualified for the post, almost entirely because of her sex and not on the basis of individual merit.

The Nose as Sex Organ

The nose has been dramatically upgraded in the hierarchy of human features which are available and instrumental for that boundless area of passions and impulses described as sexuality. In Nashville, Tennessee—home of country music and of the fugitive poets of the 1920's—a certain Dr. David Rabin, professor at Vanderbilt University, has developed nose drops, or a nasal spray, which functions as a contraceptive. The prospects for an emergence of a multitude of new feelings, satisfactions and

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equal justice and equal opportunity, and the sharing of one's earthly possessions for the common benefit of all — these are the elements of the radical faith which Dr. Jones and his congregation have translated into action. Their success has inspired and has challenged church and community leaders throughout California and the United States; they have shown conclusively that Christian socialism is a viable alternative to the rapidly deteriorating fabric of our highly competitive, acquisitive society.'

It was perhaps predictable that imbeciles in the United States would wax enthusiastic over the People's Temple ("Later, Angela Davis and others would broadcast lively messages of socialist solidarity to the beleaguered Jonestown garrison.") Even more ominous, however, is the fact that Jones had been appointed Chairman of the San Francisco Housing Authority and that Jerry Brown, Walter Mondale and many other public figures embraced the chance to bear witness to his progressive *bona fides*. And so the story of Jonestown takes Naipaul from Guyana to California, where he finds a metastasizing Guyana of the mind:

> So, it is to the deadly drama of ideas we must turn — to the ideas and to the milieu in which they took shape, ripened and, eventually, became infected with disease.

In his California journey Naipaul rejects both of the usual explanations of Jonestown. The first, of course, is that Jones was nothing but a hustler exploiting, for his personal gain, the confusions of the time. But this explanation is at best inadequate and at worst misleading. Quite apart from the fact that Jones's sincerity was attested by many of those who crossed his path, mere hustlers do not kill themselves to demonstrate their good faith.

The second explanation is that Jones was simply demented, an unrepresentative underground man whose personal charisma persuaded a handful of followers to join him in his madness. If this view were correct the Guyana suicides would be of abiding interest only to psychiatrists.

But as Naipaul convincingly demonstrates, the insanity defense is inadequate as well. Far from being unique, Jones reflected all too well the broader

LIBERAL CULTURE

propensities for the newly discovered organ of voluptuousness are mind-boggling. A whole new aspect of frontal nudity is upon the world. Cyrano de Bergerac's torments suddenly are envied by every male. The vehemence of the hesitations and perplexities that may besiege all those who consider parenthood will make legislators and the Supreme Court tremble. And what does it mean for the cinematic arts? *Deep Nose?* What's next? The prophylactic potential of deodorants?

Theological Torments

Under the title "Homosexuals Join With Quaker Assembly," the *Christian Beacon* of August 13, 1981, reprints a Religious News Service dispatch which reports on the latest doings of the American Friends Assembly in Berea, Kentucky:

> The town mayor, local ministers and others were particularly outraged by a dramatic reading listed on the Friends' program schedule. The play, entitled 'Hold Me Until Morning,' dealt with various aspects of male sexuality and was billed as 'a conversation between a man and penis.'

Formal Dates

A certain Mr. Ronald Weber, professor of American Studies at Notre Dame, tells the *Wall Street Journal* what he thinks of coeducation, that is, admitting women to once all-male bastions of higher learning.

> When the school was all-male, you had to have a formal date, so the relations between men and women were on a formal, date basis. Now relations are much more informal and spontaneous.

Mr. Weber is obviously a subtle and profound thinker, so we were somehow unsure as to what he meant by the adjective "spontaneous." We suspect, however, that his notion of spontaneous relations would not give us Petrarch's sonnets, Stendhal's musings on womanhood or even Jack London's he-man sentimentality. That is, our civilization.

What's the Difference?

The latest good news from the West coast: Governor Jerry Brown has appointed an avowed lesbian to the San Francisco Municipal Court. Her/His Honor, Ms. Mary Morgan, had this to say:

> I think it's important to have more lesbians and gays visible in our society so people can see there's not an enormous difference between us and we don't have anything to fear from each other.

Really? □

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California culture:

> One comes across Sears, Roebuck-type catalogues catering exclusively to seekers of the exotic. . . . You can, through the Accelerated Personal Growth Program (forty dollars for one and a half hours), achieve rapid personal transformation and growth in self-awareness and self-integration. . . . Actualism (no price supplied) will actualize your untapped potential for creative self-expression and enable you to communicate joyfully with all forms of life by awakening the inner light-fire. And so on and on through all the pages of the catalogue. These organizations are not the inventions of unfriendly fabulists or satirists. They exist; they have hourly rates. One must assume that to some extent, supply mirrors demand. Intellectual and spiritual adventurousness becomes indistinguishable from intellectual and spiritual collapse.

It is therefore essential to grasp that what happened at Jonestown was not the manifestation of individual insanity but the acceleration of a cultural trend. For almost two decades the self-proclaimed intelligentsia of the United States has divorced itself from reality. Socialist slogans, cultural fads and spiritualist experiences have become increasingly impervious to reason, criticism or control. Trendy "revolutionary" concepts, spewed forth by deracinated but ambitious social technocrats rotten with boredom and pleased to identify themselves with the alleged victims of a continuing American Holocaust, reverberate around the world pregnant with destruction. Jonestown, in short, was both a physical and a mental link between American liberal decadence and Third World fanatics:

> Their language tells much. Despite the ostentatious obsession with the inner life, with 'wholeness' and 'self-realization,' it is a language of fragmentation, of mechanistic self-degradation. Perpetually externalizing and abstracting, it becomes the perfect tool of a robotized spirituality.

And so, to the extent that Naipaul finds a key to the tragedy of Guyana, it turns out to be an echo of American cultural dementia. Huey Newton, Black Panther "theoretician," coins the phrase "revolutionary suicide" as a bastard adaptation of an earlier concept espoused by the Russian Nechayev. Years of rhetorical excesses firmly plant the notion of fascist threat:

> Jones had tortured his black followers with nightmare visions of imminent fascist takeover and genocidal doom. . . . But he had not invented these nightmares. The basic groundwork had been done by his black radical precursors—and by their white friends; the requisite conditioning had already taken place by the time Jones appeared on the scene.

And the "requisite conditioning" is of course not limited to Jones and his followers; it reinforces itself as it washes over the globe:

> Becoming part of the Third World is, to some degree, a psychological process; a quasi-religious conversion. It is, at bottom, a mode of being, a state of mind. That state of mind spreads like an infection and begins, after a while, to create its own political, social and personal realities, stimulated by the vocabulary of resentment and racial self-assertion.

Thus, on July 19, 1981 CBS rebroadcast a previous *60 Minutes* program inspired by the fad for Rastafarian popular music. Rastafarians, we were told, believe that Haile Selassie was the True Messiah and that reports of his death were the result of a racist media plot. Their ritual appears to consist of smoking immense quantities of marijuana and hurling tympanic anathemas at, particularly, the Bishop of Rome as the predominant symbol of white malignity.

The program was narrated by Dan Rather. By turns vapid and groveling, he told us how these beatific innocents have been "harassed" by the police (the only Rastafarian who was asked about the cult's criminal activities easily dodged the question and was not pressed for an answer) and how their marijuana crop has been spitefully (if ineffectually) sprayed with aerial poisons by the repressive Jamaican government. Nothing in Rather's attitude suggested the slightest doubt that the Rastafarian creed was at least as wise, just and true as the Judeo-Christian beliefs which it monstrously parodies. As Naipaul (who was born in Trinidad) puts it:

> Those who ought to know better nourish our crazy dreams of resurrection and redemption; those safely beyond the borders of our madness underwrite our lunacies.

The "conditioning" of which Naipaul speaks is already deeper than we dare believe. For everyone who wants to understand the process this book is essential. □

In the Mail

A Preview and Summary of 'The Wayward Welfare State' **by Roger A. Freeman; Hoover Institution Press; Stanford, California.** A comprehensive analysis of the growth of the welfare state from the New Deal 30's to the Great Society 70's and its consequences for America.

Unconditional Surrender: God's Program for Victory **by Gary North; Geneva Press; Tyler, Texas.** An introduction into the basics of Christianity which covers issues like the nature of God, man and law and the conflict between Christian institutions and the institutions of secular humanism.

The Hospital That Ate Chicago **by George Ross Fisher, M.D.; The Saunders Press; Philadelphia.** An in-depth, detailed study of the cost of health care and hospitals, including Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance.

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Charlie's Angels' Catholicism

Andrew M. Greeley: *The Cardinal Sins;* Warner Books; New York.

by Philip F. Lawler

About a year ago, with their best-selling novel *The Spike,* Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss added an unhealthy new genre to the American literary scene: the ideological thriller. Within weeks of the book's publication, Moss and de Borchgrave had become steady performers on the talk-show circuit, bringing their political message to a new and broader audience. Inevitably, dozens of otherwise sober political essayists rushed to follow the same route, producing pulp novels with transparent ideological messages. Say what you will about *The Spike* itself (for two contrasting views, see *Chronicles of Culture,* Sept./Oct. 1980); its epigones have done for the American novel what the medfly did for California agriculture. Time and again a competent nonfiction writer has revealed himself as a pitiful novelist, wrapping his ideological fantasies in a flimsy fictional combination of lurid plot, stilted dialogue, and (always) lots of sex. Andrew Greeley's first novel, *The Cardinal Sins,* is just such a disaster.

Andrew Greeley is of course *Father* Andrew Greeley, a Catholic priest. The dust-cover photograph shows him in a Roman collar, insisting, "It is a parish priest I set out to be, and it is the work of the parish ministry that brings me the greatest happiness." Yet he is not a parish priest; *Who's Who* lists him as a sociologist and educator. And his novel is little more than a burlesque of parish life and an attack on the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

In academic life Father Greeley is a pollster, so he should be accustomed to the task of creating fictional identities. And he insists in an Author's Note that the book is not autobiographical. Yet the main character—the narrator—bears a striking resemblance to someone we know. He is an Irish-American priest from Chicago who rises to prominence as a social scientist, while simultaneously running afoul of his bishop's wrath. At the book's end this central figure, Kevin Brennan, is a dissident priest challenging the Vatican hierarchy from his own secular power base. Father Greeley's own career matches every one of those particulars. So when the narrator of *The Cardinal Sins* depicts his pastor as an intolerant fool, his bishop as a lecherous drunk and the Papal Delegate as a snobbish time-server, the reader inevitably infers Andrew Greeley's contempt for his superiors. That contempt is made explicit even before the novel itself begins. In an introductory "Note About the Cardinal Sins," Father Greeley makes the sardonic jibe: "The cardinal sins have nothing to do, of course, with the members of the Sacred College, who, as we all know, commit hardly any sins."

From that point on, the novel is a hammer-and-tongs attack on Rome. The ecclesiastical characters are venal and petty, plotting every move to fulfill their own private ambitions. The honorable characters are the pragmatic Chicago-style political horse-traders, and the religious characters are portrayed sympathetically only when they emulate that style. If the author loves parish work, his characters give no explanation for that enthusiasm. Life in the seminary is an unrelieved burden; life as a parish priest is a bourgeois charade. The priests in this account can only gain satisfaction by stepping out into the secular world. Or, of course, by attacking the Vatican.

The plot of this novel is a masterpiece of convoluted implausibility. The author slaps together a congeries of sex and blackmail, terrorism and a papal election. The priest-hero, conveniently enough, practices karate and pistolry as hobbies; he casually encounters a CIA operative who, without asking any questions, furnishes deadly gadgetry in the best James Bond tradition; one-dimensional characters appear and disappear whenever the plot development requires. In the climax, Father Brennan disarms a pair of right-wing fanatics in hand-to-hand midnight combat on an island off the coast of Italy, saving his female consort from a ritual rape. As if that were not enough to torture the reader's credulity, Father Greeley concocts an even more preposterous dénouement: the brutal murder of a sado-masochistic journalist, the assassination of an American painter, the frustration of a scheming homosexual Cardinal, and the elevation of Karol Wojtyla to the papacy.

How does this all come to pass? It would be absurd to trace the whole surreal range of action. (Just as it was absurd to invent it.) Suffice it to say that the whole international intrigue grows out of the relationship between two Chicago teen-agers. These two characters, Kevin Brennan and Patrick Donahue, each choose a career in the priesthood. One is a quiet, inconspicuous priest who adheres to his vow of celibacy (although not to his pledge of obedience). The other is an ambitious, manipulative politico with uncontrollable sexual passions who carries on a long-standing love affair with his high-school sweetheart. Naturally, given the author's animus against the Church, it is the latter priest who rises quickly through the hierarchy to become a powerful Cardinal. Father Greeley's message is clear. The Church, as he portrays it, will condone cruelty, larceny, sexual indulgence and drunkenness, but not independent thought.

Although Father Greeley mercifully spares the reader from any explicit bedroom scenes, the entire book is preoccu-

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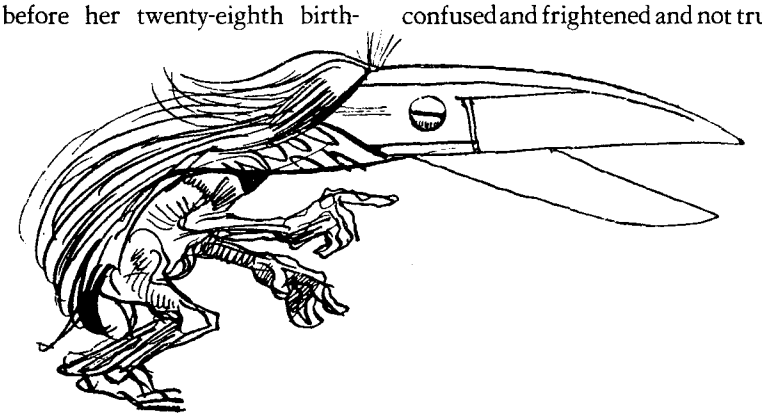
pied with the relations between the leading male and female characters. Cardinal Donahue compiles a whole catalogue of sexual liaisons, including at least three attempted rapes (one of which is successful), two homosexual affairs and one illegitimate child. Father Brennan, meanwhile, sticks to the letter of the law. But that does not deter him from sempiternal fantasizing about his own teen-age sweetheart. At last his celibacy is put to the test when that same woman confesses: "The electricity has never gone away," and volunteers to share his bed that night. He declines, for "a whole lot of reasons. Mostly because I think it would probably destroy the electricity, and that's too important in my life to give up." So much for the virtue of chastity; for Kevin Brennan, celibacy is a route to perverse sensual pleasure.

Any book about Catholic sexual obsessions naturally touches on the critical question of birth control. And Father Greeley's own thoughts on that subject are well-known. Andrew Greeley the pollster has argued that, since the Pope's stand on birth control is unpopular, and since Church attendance has declined since the appearance of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae,* therefore the Pope's stand has driven people out of the Church. (A more perfect example of the *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy would be difficult to invent.) In *The Cardinal Sins,* Father Brennan refuses to approve the Pill for his friends' use. As a result, one friend has three children before her twenty-eighth birthday—a fate so horrible Father Brennan promptly changes his mind on the question of birth control.

Similarly, since Father Greeley has written a great deal about the politics of Vatican City, it comes as no surprise that his novel concentrates on the machinations of the Roman Curia. During the conclave leading up to John Paul's election, the College of Cardinals (as depicted by Greeley) is indistinguishable from a smoke-filled room in Mayor Daley's Chicago. This preoccupation with Vatican intrigue extends, ridiculously, to even the least religious characters in the novel. Years after they have ceased to practice their faith, these characters spend their vacations at poolside discussing the latest news from the Curia and the agenda for the next conclave.

As a novelist Father Greeley suffers from a marked inability to imagine people unlike himself. Thus he cannot understand that most Catholics (let alone most Americans) have neither interest in nor understanding of the everyday workings of the Vatican. He even has trouble remembering that the world is not composed entirely of Irish-American Catholics from Chicago. Yet at the same time Andrew Greeley the sociologist has trouble recalling the distinctive teachings of the Catholic Church. In his introductory note, he explains that "The cardinal sins result not from fundamental evil but from fundamental goodness running out of control, from human love that is confused and frightened and not trusting enough to love." As sociology this explanation may be adequate; as theology it is puerile.



While his characters are committing various sins against God, Father Greeley makes similar offenses against the English language. In the book's first episode the author describes an automobile accident by using virtually every available cliché. Scant pages later, in a conversation that takes place while they are washing the dishes, a mother offhandedly asks her teen-age son, "What do you young people want out of life?" He replies, inscrutably, "We all want contradictions." But the book's most execrable prose comes after the papal election, when a Jewish psychiatrist (the book's only non-Catholic) finally has a chance to deliver a few lines:

> 'Your goddamn Church,' he shouted, 'is a virgin and whore. As old as sin and as young as a flower bud. That's the kind of woman I like!'
>
> Ellen clung to him. 'Herbert . . . what a terrible, awful, wonderful thing to say.'
>
> 'At least she's alive,' I said.

From the available evidence, it seems clear that the author views this refined dialogue as his emotional peak.

This wretched little novel is really a polemic in masquerade, yet it fails both as novel and as polemic. As fiction it is strained and contrived; as essay it is heavy-handed and smug. Only the most gullible reader will be persuaded, and only the most indulgent will be entertained. But Father Greeley has had his chance to scoff at his ecclesiastical superiors, so perhaps for him the novel is a success.

In a breathless dust-jacket blurb, one Nelson DeMille praises Father Greeley's courage and honesty as a novelist, claiming that "Three hundred years ago, he would have been burned at the stake." But who would have burned him: his bishop or his editor? Really it doesn't matter; those were the good old days. □

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Mystery Fiction and the Spirits of Cities

Martin Cruz Smith: *Gorky Park;* Random House; New York.

Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy-Casares: *Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi;* E. P. Dutton; New York.

by Mary Ellen Fox

Many famous sleuths in the detective fiction of our century have been associated with cities. Not only is a city the terrain in which they operate, but also the city itself is transformed from mere background to a vivid, integral part of the action. To envision Peter Wimsey without London, Sam Spade without San Francisco, Maigret without Paris, Nero Wolfe without New York or Martin Beck without Stockholm is to imagine novels with entirely different kinds of heroes, plots and flavor.

The hero of *Gorky Park* is nominally chief homicide inspector Arkady Renko, but the real protagonist is Moscow. Like Raymond Chandler's Los Angeles, the Russian capital itself occupies center stage and exerts a potent and sinister influence over characters and their fates. The aforementioned London, Paris, San Francisco, New York and Stockholm exist in either a benign or a neutral way. Maigret's Paris is a serene pond of eating, drinking and other bourgeois delights, occasionally invaded by a turbulent crime only to return to its former calm; Wolfe's New York—actually Archie Goodwin's city—is palpably present with its hard-bitten police and newspapermen and chic night spots, but it neither attracts nor repels.

Only Chandler and Martin Cruz Smith have created a place which doesn't know its place. The very cities of Los Angeles and Moscow undergo anthropomorphoses, not only acquiring personalities more memorable than those of the detectives, but ultimately transcending the sleuths' activities as primary focus. Philip Marlowe and Arkady Renko are similar in that they represent the remnants of decency in societies permeated by corruption and decay. Theirs are nightmare worlds of scoundrels, con men, hypocrisy and betrayal, differing only in that Marlowe's Los Angeles is a society with too much license, while Renko's Moscow has none at all. The lone hero—regarded as a foolish fanatic by his fellow citizens—holds his honor dear; it is the only thing that remains to humanize him and to differentiate him from his compatriots, all of whom have their price. As modern-day Don Quixotes tilting at windmills, Marlowe and Renko are dealt many blows, both physical and spiritual; they end up with their illusions in shreds, but still each clings to his own knightly code of decency, loyalty and professionalism. In societies which are "on the take," Marlowe never seems to have more than $100 in the bank, and Renko rejects the notion of tailoring his activities to gratify the Soviet authorities, even though compromising his principles would bring him a promotion, a better apartment, more abundant provisions.

The plot of *Gorky Park*—which is as convoluted as most modern-day thrillers, with double, triple and quadruple agents—deals with the shady reasons why the Soviet government is protecting the machinations of an American capitalist in Russia. The latter (many may perceive in him the entrepreneurship of Mr. Armand Hammer, the notorious multimillionaire with friendship ties to Soviet leaders for the last half-century) forges a Soviet-American friendship while lining his pockets and betraying his friends. When Renko discovers the perpetrator of three grisly murders, he simultaneously uncovers the venality and corruption of a system where ideology is twisted and subverted for materialistic, dehumanizing and ultimately murderous ends. In a reality where ". . . everyone informs right from the nursery. Everyone has dirty hands," Renko symbolizes the last vestige of integrity. He is both hero and everyman. So the Soviet system has succeeded in creating a "new man" after all: "everyman" is a unique figure there. Values and virtues which mankind has cherished for millennia—such as honesty, loyalty, courage and even love—are either on the verge of extinction or distorted beyond recognition.

" 'Gorky Park' winds down to a rather clichéd international shoot-em-up, complete with murky speculations on the difference between American and Soviet justice . . ."
—New York Times

Thus the novel becomes valuable not so much as fiction, or even as a thriller, but as yet another exposé. The streets, buildings and the all-pervasive bleakness of the Soviet environment achieve a palpable literary presence. Moscow becomes more than just an exotic locale, it emerges as a way of life. On a day-to-day basis we can see what communism does to what we used to call the quality of life: alcoholism, the national sport, becomes an unalienable right and ultimate hedonism; conjugal, filial and parental relationships must be subordinated to the demands of the state; the accused is guilty a priori (otherwise he wouldn't be accused); and free expression of thought is as impossible to imagine as access to unlimited meat and produce. From the sublime to the ridiculous, Smith underlines his descriptions with biting irony. Some might say that *1984* was a metaphor (although we see how Orwell's surreal-

Dr. Fox is a frequent contributor to these pages.

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istic vision of several decades past has become today's reality), but an average reader has no difficulty recognizing in *Gorky Park* the ring of truth, authenticity, reality. Even the ideologically indifferent can be converted when spirit becomes flesh. In *Notebooks of a Dilettante*, Leopold Tyrmand wrote:

> If I have to explain what communism is to an average American, I deliberately use a technical metaphor to appeal to their pragmatic, engineerlike imagination. 'Communism,' I say, 'is like a damaged or broken engine or plumbing installation. No one knows how to repair it. But it runs and people are obliged to use it.'
>
> 'Oh!' sighs the American, 'it must be hell!'

In developing the simile, *Gorky Park* has succeeded better than any other fictional popularization of the evils of the U.S.S.R. When the banal intricacies of its plot fade from memory, what remains is an invaluable look into a universe best accessible through the unpretentious wisdom of a detective story.

* * *

In 1942, under the pseudonym of H. Bustos Domecq, Borges collaborated with Adolfo Bioy Casares to produce a work of detective fiction. As a serious writer of profound philosophical and spiritual insight, Borges is reminiscent of Chesterton, who also delved into the detective genre in his Father Brown stories. And no doubt the Chesterton parallel was deliberate, in Borges's mind, since among the many characters who populate these six stories appears one Father Brown. The latter, in the guise of a criminal, hints at the playfulness of Borges's imagination. The name of the detective himself, of course, reinforces the notion of parody. In fact, it would be altogether easy to dismiss the book as an instance of "the master" merely having a good time. Borges himself wrote, years later:

> Max Carrados had attempted a blind detective; Bioy and I went one step further and confined our detective to a jail cell. The book was at the same time a satire of the Argentines. For many years, the dual identity of Bustos Domecq was never revealed. When it finally was, people thought that Bustos was a joke, his writing could hardly be taken seriously.

These stories are not a significant contribution to detective fiction, and Don Isidro is no rival to Holmes and his followers. What Borges succeeds in doing is satirizing the Argentine government and society and in brilliantly creating colloquial dialogue which differs according to character, reflecting each individual's region, class, psychology and prejudices. The corruption of the Argentine government is a recurrent theme: Parodi is in jail for a murder committed by someone else who luckily (for him) had the right government connections. Borges also ridicules Argentine snobbery, literary pretentiousness, provincialism, anti-Semitism and the country's prevalent xenophobia. The latter is counterpointed against the reality of Buenos Aires as a melting pot. A society formed by many groups, among them Italians, Jews, Chinese, which nevertheless focuses on its "ethnic purity" and hostility to these various groups can only exist plagued by self-destructive tensions. Against the backdrop of what was happening in Europe at the time, Borges's satirization of these attitudes can be construed as poignant warning. The various racial factors which helped to create modern Argentina are celebrated here; each character expresses himself idiomatically and idiosyncratically, thus rendering the six detective stories a valid social profile. The recent publication of this fine translation by Norman Thomas di Giovanni, a long-time associate of Borges, should interest all aficionados of Borges's writing. Even a relatively minor work of one of our most important living writers, long overdue for a Nobel Prize, is significant in presenting a rounded portrait of a multifaceted talent.

Both *Gorky Park* and *Six Problems for Don Isidro Parodi* are formally detective stories. Both, however, transcend the genre and become trenchant social commentaries, or, more simply —literature. □

Supply-Side and All That Cuts

Bruce Bartlett: *Reaganomics: Supply-Side Economics in Action;* Arlington House Publishers; New Rochelle, New York.

by Harold C. Gordon

In 1977 supply-side economics did not exist. By 1981, it was the basis for the greatest single tax cut in our nation's history. In a breathtakingly short period of time, a daring idea precipitated an economic and political revolution. For years it had been the Republicans who fretted about budget deficits while the Democrats shrugged off the whole national debt with the breezy rejoinder, "We owe it to ourselves." Then, almost overnight, it was the Republicans who were saying that deficits didn't matter, the important thing was cutting taxes, while the Democrats were donning the hair shirt of fiscal restraint. How did it all happen?

For those who came in late, Bruce Bartlett's supply-side primer is required reading. In *Reaganomics,* the young congressional staffer (who as an aide to Congressman Jack Kemp played a major

Mr. Gordon is a legislative assistant to Senator John East of North Carolina.

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role in the events he describes) gives a concise but thorough account of supply-side theory and practice.

Although it is a radical departure from conventional economic wisdom, the supply-side doctrine has eminently respectable roots. In effect it is Say's law rediscovered. Jean-Baptiste Say, the great 19th-century French economist, held that government ought to encourage production instead of consumption, since the former not only created the goods and articles of commerce but gave workers the means with which to purchase them. This principle was later reduced to the catch-phrase, "Supply creates its own demand."

Say's law dominated economic thinking and policy-making for over a century, until it was "refuted" by John Maynard Keynes. The Great Depression had struck and was widely (and erroneously) blamed on "overproduction." Actually, what had happened was that a sudden contraction in the money supply had pricked the balloon of 1920's prosperity. The classical response would have been deflation—allowing wages and prices to fall to appropriate levels—but Keynes gave the politicians an irresistible alternative.

Say had never presumed that overproduction could not occur in one or several segments of a nation's economy; his view was rather that overproduction could not occur in all segments at once. Keynes, however, argued that the Depression disproved Say's law, and that the answer to overproduction was for government to stimulate demand through deficit spending. Not surprisingly, the politicians agreed. As W. H. Hutt, a venerable survivor of this period, has said: "The classical economists were prescribing castor oil for the patient, while the Keynesians were prescribing champagne."

Keynes himself did not entirely slip his classical moorings, and he lived long enough to have qualms about the uses to which the politicians began to put his theories. Had he lived longer still, he would have been horrified. Keynesian economics became the vehicle for smashing every restraint on government spending. In the United States, "spend and elect" became the mainstay of the Democratic Party. During the last quarter-century, when the Democrats enjoyed uninterrupted control of both houses of Congress, they pushed this policy to its outer limits. By creating numerous "open-ended entitlements" (liberal transfer payments for which millions of Americans easily qualified), the Democrats ensured that federal spending would rise. By increasing spending, they also ensured that inflation would force taxpayers into higher brackets. By making increases automatic, through cost-of-living adjustments and other budget trip wires, they ensured that spending and taxes would rise inexorably, without them having to incur the opprobrium of voting for either.

What gave the game away, of course, was the cumulative effect that these gimmicks had on the economy. People at the lower income levels found that it was not only easier to go on welfare than to work, it was actually more profitable. People at the higher income levels found that they had more incentive to put their money into tax shelters than into productive investments. Middle-income people, the hardest hit of all, frantically acquired real estate, engaged in barter or joined the underground economy. Beating the tax/inflation squeeze became a national mania.

With the recession of 1974-75, the

LIBERAL CULTURE

Business as Usual

Here is the description for a wondrous item in the Christmas edition of *Harriet Carter Distinctive Gifts* . . . , a mail-order-house catalogue from North Wales, Pennsylvania:

> PIN-UP PALS—MALE CENTERFOLD PLAYING CARDS provide loads of laughs for the broad-minded. Each card features a different nude male model in a charmingly coy pose (53 poses in all, counting the joker). Isn't it about time we got even, girls, with all our pin-up ogling men? Lovely, demure lace print design on the backs of the standard deck.

This is not the only solicitation of a charmingly coy nature amidst countless offerings of musical dolls, thimble figurines and festive Christmas plates. A broadminded eye will fall upon a "shapely toothbrush and razor set" whose handles feature various female convexities and are named, respectively, Sexy Sally and Sexy Raquel ("blades not included") which "will spark any man's interest in grooming." Then there is something called "Penthouse Peek-A-Boo Temperature Pet," with which one can "tell the temperature by simply peeking through the young damsel's play suit" that is supposed to adorn executives' desks. The catalog carries a portrait of Ms. Harriet Carter, the female entrepreneur who seems neither to notice some contradictions in her offerings, nor to reflect on the respectability of her trade. She looks wholesome, middle class, and she sports a winsome, toothy, all-American smile. In a letter to prospective customers, she calls her gifts "fine." We disagree. Some may be fine, but others are just plain vulgar, dirty and farcically advertised. □

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bankruptcy of the Keynesian position was at last exposed. Unemployment soared to 8.5 million while the government ran up the largest deficit since World War II—$45 billion. This was the very coincidence that Keynes had pronounced impossible.

It was at this point that a certain former football player, then a Congressman from New York, developed an interest in economic issues. Jack Kemp became a catalyst. Assisted by theoreticians Paul Craig Roberts, Norman Ture and Jude Wanniski, Kemp devised a new strategy for the Republicans. Where they had once been tax collectors for the Democrats, preoccupied with paying off the deficits run up by the other party, they would seize the initiative by advocating economic growth through massive tax cuts. Kemp himself, in cooperation with Senator William Roth of Delaware, introduced a bill to slash personal income taxes by 30 percent over three years. This bill, in a slightly modified form, became the keystone of President Reagan's own economic recovery program.

Supply-siders insist that we can have tax cuts without inflation; that the resulting economic boom will swell revenues to the point where matching cuts in expenditures are unnecessary. As Bruce Bartlett writes:

> A tax cut which merely reduces government revenue, government spending staying the same, might be inflationary because it would probably require monetization of the increased debt. But a reduction in tax rates—in particular, marginal tax rates—does more than just increase individual disposable incomes. It alters relative prices, changing the tradeoff between work and leisure, savings and consumption. Whether such a tax cut would be inflationary in the short run depends on how much additional production and saving it generates and how the government finances its short-run debt.

Like other supply-side fiscalists, Mr. Bartlett marshals a battery of precedents to support his contention. Chief among these are the Coolidge-Mellon tax cuts of 1924-28 and the Kennedy-Johnson cut of 1964. There is no denying that these cuts were fabulously successful; what remains to be seen is whether the same strategy will work as well under drastically altered circumstances. In 1964 inflation and unemployment were negligible by today's standards. The most obnoxious federal agencies—EPA, OSHA, EEOC, the Consumer Product Safety Commission—had yet to be invented, and regulations generally were nowhere near as voluminous or expensive.

These differences must be taken into account. There is much in the supply-side argument that appeals to common sense. Most of us would acknowledge that people will work harder and longer if they are allowed to keep more of their earnings, and that investors will put their money where they can obtain the best return. But history teaches us that prolonged inflation can warp perceptions of self-interest. At this writing, at least, there is no evidence that the American people are convinced that supply-side economics will deliver what it promises. Indeed, prominent members of the business community appear skeptical that it can. Wall Street's reaction to passage of the President's tax cut was something less than rapture.

Furthermore, federal regulations will remain a drag on economic development for years to come. Regulation annually diverts over $100 billion dollars from productive to nonproductive uses. Whatever the administration may do to lighten this burden by trimming and consolidating will take time and, in any event, it is unlikely that the American people would countenance a complete return to the environmental, safety, health and consumer-protection standards of two decades ago.

For these reasons, Mr. Reagan has chosen to pursue something less than a pure supply-side strategy. He has partly offset his tax cuts with spending cuts and has resorted, at least temporarily, to high interest rates. Orthodox supply-siders are unlikely to quarrel with the former. There are plenty of wasteful and intrusive federal programs that ought to be done away with in the name of limited government alone. The latter, on the other hand, is an anathema to them. High interest rates are inhibiting the growth surge that the supply-siders say will follow in the wake of the tax cut. They are particularly damaging to the small, innovative companies that are the leading creators of new jobs. The administration realizes this, but maintains that high interest rates are necessary to control the money supply and to satisfy the public that it is serious about throttling inflation. The supply-siders fear that this is another case of the same combination of faintheartedness and halfway measures that may have already doomed the Thatcher experiment in Great Britain.

Time will tell who is right in this particular debate, just as it will render the final verdict on the success or failure of the whole of the administration's economic recovery plan. Mr. Reagan's bold gamble may fail, but that does not mean that he was not justified in attempting it. Keynesianism is dead, dollar-for-dollar tax and budget cuts would be insufficient to revive the economy, and to balance the budget by raising taxes is unthinkable at this time. Supply-side economics, in one form or another, is the only alternative.

Mr. Bartlett, who conceived, wrote and titled his book before Ronald Reagan took office, could not have foreseen the particular variation that the President would adopt. He was correct, however, that Mr. Reagan would make tax reduction his first priority—a decision made largely on the strength of the concepts so admirably summarized by Mr. Bartlett.

Aldous Huxley once wrote, "No less than war or statecraft, the history of economics has its heroic ages." To read *Reaganomics* is to realize that we live in stirring times. □

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Modish Boredom

Gore Vidal: *Creation;* Random House; New York.

by Joseph Schwartz

Creation is set in the 5th century B.C., the age of Persia, Darius, Xerxes, the Buddha, Confucius, Herodotus and Pericles. The narrator, Cyrus Spitama, brought up in the Persian court and befriended by Xerxes, is made an ambassador and journeys to India, Cathay and Greece. He has two questions on his mind. How did creation come to be, and what explanation can there be for the existence of evil? The novel speaks of the contemporary world in the guise of history. Potentially heady and exciting stuff, indeed, but Gore Vidal's 18th novel is, instead, a dull and listless affair.

That it is dull comes as no surprise; so were *Myra Breckinridge, Two Sisters* and *Myron.* But he has never been so weary before. *Creation* is a tired work that challenges itself by going on and on, as if length alone would somehow provide the author with an opportunity to bring the exhausted (and exhausting) narrative to life. Cyrus Spitama, the protagonist and narrator, is a 75-year-old bore who has "a voice that never deserts me, nor does my memory." Would that both had done so about one-third of the way through. His long-suffering nephew and amanuensis, Democritus, takes down his dictation and wins an award for endurance. The "speak, memory" device fails because Cyrus is simply not interesting enough to hold one's attention through 510 pages. His being blind, suggesting a parallel to Homer, is outrageously inappropriate and certainly pretentious. His goals in life are to serve Xerxes and to see far-off places, tellingly modest ambitions for a grandson of Zoroaster. When such colorless narrators have been used with success, it is because they were pairs of eyes through which interesting characters who bear the burden of action were seen. The characters in this novel are without exception two-dimensional and hastily sketched. Even their names are forgotten while reading the book. Xerxes, the Great King, for instance, is described as "more than a brother to me . . . my other self." If he is so important to Cyrus, one would expect him to emerge at some point in the novel as more than a stick figure; he doesn't. Lais, Cyrus's mother, comes on stage all abustle and threatens to become interesting, but she is dropped and remains little more than a name. Telling rather than showing is an economical device for the historian but must be eschewed by the novelist. As in his earlier *Burr,* Vidal does not rise to the challenge of making historical personages interesting. Rather, like the quickie writer of historical romances, he depends upon the persona *in esse* to capture and hold the reader's interest.

More important than this, however, is that the narrator is his own worst enemy, self-defeating because of his view that "there is no such thing as a true account of anything." That this is the posture of much modern historicism is no excuse. It is as debilitating for historians as it is for Cyrus. Why should he bother to ramble on and on if this is the case? How can he hope to correct Herodotus, one of his aims, if he holds the view that seeing the world from one's own vantage point makes a true account impossible? In that case, Herodotus, or anyone for that matter, needs no correction, since correction is impossible without a standard by which perception and its results can be judged. This is pluralism gone mad. Perhaps the implication is that one's person is so attractive and compelling that it requires some kind of attention in the historical game of now-you-see-it, now-you-don't. But Cyrus is about as interesting as a post. He is like those sailors of whom Cardinal Newman wrote who traveled around the world seeing only the underside of the carpet, because they had no perspective from which to see the design of the whole.

" 'Julian' was wonderful; 'Creation,' I am happy to report, is even better."
—*New York Times*

Contradicting his own words, Cyrus does wish to give a true account of the major theologies of his time from his gradually weakening Zoroastrian point of view. Since he cannot have it both ways, there is major confusion with respect to purpose in the construction of the book.

There are three ideological strands in the novel. First there is the attempt, as in Vidal's *Julian,* to take a non-Western perspective on things. The Greeks are the villains and Cyrus speaks for the great East. Readers familiar with Robert Graves and Mary Renault will make interesting comparisons with Vidal. What we have inherited from Plato, Aristotle and the rest—the importance of mind and metaphysics—can be said to be why we went wrong from the very beginning. Second, Cyrus's travels and the many tiresome coincidences make it possible for him to come in contact with Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, and to reassess his own Zoroastrianism. Taoism, harmony with the "always-so," is rejected because it demands a passivity which Cyrus cannot accept. The rejection is based as well, I suspect, on the demands which the "always-so" makes of one. The Buddha's idea that existence in itself is something painful appeals to Cyrus, but he concludes finally that "the Buddha

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himself is a chilling, even dangerous figure." Confucius comes closest to making a convert of him; "of all the men I have known, he was the wisest." Unlike Socrates he answered questions, speaking of what was and of what should be, offering "a very clear idea of what constitutes goodness in the human scale."

> I think that for all practical purposes, the Confucians are atheists. They do not believe in an afterlife or a day of judgment. They are not interested in how this world was created or for what purpose. Instead, they act as if this life is all there is and to conduct it properly is all that matters. For them, heaven is simply a word to describe correct behaviour.

The paradox that alerts the reader to Vidal's view is that the most imposing of the religious thinkers is the least religious. Concerned only with morality, he is a man "entirely of this world." Cyrus becomes convinced that every religion is confused in its attempt to explain reality—Creation. In addition, he becomes the complete cynic. "Wherever one goes on this earth, all things are spoiled by men" because they "look entirely to their own interest." The failure of religion to come to understandable and decent terms with evil and the inherent brutishness of men combine to give the novel its tone of secular despair.

Up to this point it has been difficult to understand why Vidal makes Cyrus the grandson of Zoroaster, the founder of the chief religion of ancient Persia. One must be a bit quick-footed here to detect the third ideological strand of the novel. It is a commonplace view in cultural history that of all the ancient religions Zoroastrianism was most like Christianity, which became historically the religion of the West. Zoroaster opposed polytheism by proclaiming Ahura Mazda, the "Wise Lord," as the one, true God. At the end of life, he taught, the good are rewarded and the wicked punished. The dualism he preached was radically at odds with the this-worldliness of Confucius and the Buddha's Nirvana. In these respects and only in the broadest possible sense, it shared some of the major ideas of Christianity. By being a Zoroastrian Cyrus, who is half Greek, is turned around, as it were, and serves a dual function by becoming an unexpected representative of Western thought. The buried scenario of the novel, now coming to light, is an attack on Christianity, because it, along with Greek thought, is at the base of Western culture. Two birds are being killed with one stone. In economical fashion the noetic illumination of the Greeks and the pneumatic illumination of the Jews, the two most profound moments in the history of the ancient world, are dealt with as the reasons for the failure of the West.

This implied critique and its paradigm are made clearer as we see Cyrus at the end of his life through the eyes of his nephew, Democritus. On only two occasions is he allowed to speak, and both times it is to act as the reader's guide in arriving at a final view. Although it is a clumsy and intrusive device, the intent is clear. Democritus tells us that while Cyrus had been a good Zoroastrian thinking that the essential questions had been answered, "he was too intelligent, finally, to ignore contrary evidence." Cyrus was "beginning to suspect, if not believe, there is neither a beginning nor an end to a creation which exists in a state of flux in a time that is truly infinite." By his own admission Cyrus's quest had failed. "There *is* something missing. Something I could not find anywhere on this earth in the course of a long life." In contrast to Thornton Wilder's *Ides of March* and *The Woman of Andros* where the something missing will be supplied by Incarnation, in *Creation* it is an ignis fatuus that Cyrus has been mistakenly seeking. Yet, Cyrus's otherwise failed quest is made meaningful in that it becomes the beginning of the quest of Democritus who discovers that:

LIBERAL CULTURE

Red Herring

Those Americans schooled in the liberal culture's horror chambers know that nowadays the woods are teeming with hot-eyed book burners intent on destroying all books save the Bible and perhaps a hymnal or two. No surprise then that, when recently polled, a group of nearly two thousand school librarians, principals and superintendents warned of an impending holocaust of censorship. The educators solemnly intoned that redneck zealots had ruthlessly assailed over two hundred individual titles in 1980 alone. Naturally, these censors went after such volumes as J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* and *The American Heritage Dictionary.* But hold on a minute! That list of two hundred books contains some intriguing titles: Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice,* Orwell's *1984* and Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich.* Are these also on the hit lists of the right-wingers? Would Orwell's and Solzhenitsyn's condemnations of Soviet rule cause unease among those who have displayed the American flag in their lapels and adorned their cars with "Love it or Leave it!" bumper stickers? Is *The Merchant of Venice* the victim of that Southern Baptist who recently asserted that God does not listen to the prayers of the Jews? Is the liberal left immune to all censorial temptation? □

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> Ultimately, there is neither straight line or circle. But to understand how things are, one must advance beyond the present childlike phases of human existence. Gods and devils must be abandoned along with those notions of good and evil which have relevance to day-to-day life but mean nothing to that material unity which contains all things and makes them one. Matter is all. All is matter.

The tone is that of a 20th-century speaker addressing a 20th-century audience.

It is Democritus, not Cyrus, who discovers the cause of the coming into being of all things, the trick of a tired or baffled writer. The reader has every right to cry "Foul" since the whole thing is neatly packaged into two speeches. Democritus is no character at all, only the pen that puts Cyrus's voice to paper. He has acquired no fictional authority for such a role. Yet the conclusion of the lengthy quest is put in his voice. Creation is caused by the ceaseless whirl he names necessity. "Everything happens according to necessity . . . creation is constantly created and re-created." Materialism and necessity are not only congenial partners, they also make cynicism feel at home. Democritus as deus ex machina stops, not ends, the novel. There is no organic close as when something that we started reaches an ending through its own natural finality.

Democritus's final comment explaining his failure to show how he reached his conclusion invites speculation. "I have written on these matters elsewhere." Vidal has, in fact, written of these matters elsewhere. "I suffer from the disease of visionaries without, sad to say, the compensating vision." His secular romanticism has always been evident. Near the beginning of his career it began to turn itself inside-out, hiding its tender skin with the rough protection of cynicism. At the very least, this explains the severe disappointment his characters experience while watching the thirsty evil drink up the riches of creation. Giving evil credit for more power than it has by making it a positive thing is a too-easy rationalization for life having gone sour, for sexual anxiety and disappointment, for the failure of a hoped-for social order, for anarchy, for brutality and for what might have been. Necessity and materialism, dark romanticism, make apology irrelevant and free conduct from the anxiety caused by volition. Freedom to choose places too great a burden on inadequate man. Like Cyrus, he finds the quest a failure, wrong from the start. While being makes demands on mind and will, the flurry of atoms is mindless. Perhaps it is that the consequences of choice are, in this view of things, unbearable. Materialism reduces the number of choices so drastically that the field of experience is limited to varying degrees of sensual satisfaction. For a time that appears to make things easier, but when the fragile body wears down, necessity is the saving explanation. One of the darker passages from *Measure for Measure* selected by Vidal as an epigraph for a collection of short stories provides an accurate insight into his sense of man.

> Our natures do pursue,
> Like rats that ravin down their proper bane,
> A thirsty evil, and when we drink, we die.

If *Creation* is, as I suspect, a report on the way things are by a contemporary to his contemporaries, it is a case of the blind leading the blind. □

LIBERAL CULTURE

Some Remarks on Equality of World Views

In an otherwise fair article on the never-ending saga of our origins on this planet, we can read the following opinion, featured in *Future Life Magazine,* about the creationists' postulates:

> There is also a real danger when they attempt to indoctrinate other people's children in that belief as well under the label of equal time for an alternate theory—and, semantics aside, any theory which has as its bottom line the supposition that the world was created by an unexplainable, unexplorable 'supernatural force' is religious.

The strife between creationists and evolutionists is, in its essence, a conflict of two world views: the spiritual and the materialistic. Why teaching one of these *Weltanschauungs* in public schools is proper, while the teaching of the other is called "indoctrination," is a puzzle of logic, and it is never explained by *Future Life Magazine.* Going to church,

where a child may hear something about creation, is in our society a *voluntary* activity, while sending children to school where evolution is taught, even as theory, is legally *necessary.* Thus, a certain warping of evenhandedness becomes obvious. Some world views are obviously more equal than others, and all the evolutionists' recitations about democracy, progress and enlightenment seem to shelter some purely coercive factors. □

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Odors of the Recent Past

Evan Hunter: *Love, Dad;* Crown Publishers; New York.

David Bradley: *The Chaneysville Incident;* Harper & Row; New York.

by Gary S. Vasilash

When the late 1960's and early 70's come to mind, the vision of the student as would-be urban guerrilla, rock musician, dope smoker, dropout, etc., is in the vanguard; few things in that period were as colorful. *Student,* of course, is a euphemism. Although colleges were in session when they weren't being "trashed" by long-haired, bleary-eyed (too much pot) hordes who protested everything from the food being served in the dining commons to the Vietnam War, many of the young people in the forefront couldn't possibly have attended very many classes, if any at all. After all, it takes time to learn the words and chords for all those songs of protest. To say nothing of the fact that if a person spends an entire weekend at a demonstration or an overheated rock festival on some blighted piece of real estate in the midst of several thousand other people, most of whom are guzzling wine from imitation goatskins and eating bathtub pharmaceuticals, things won't be too clear on Monday morning when it's time for American Government 101.

Some names and events stand out in the history of those years: the Summer of Love and the march on the Pentagon (1967); the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago; Woodstock, "An Aquarian Exposition" (1969); Kent State (1970). Marijuana, which police officials clued concerned parents smells like burning rope, became an identifying symbol of the hippie movement or flower children or counterculture or freaks or whatever else those people might be called. (It had once been identified with the Beats of the 50's, so many half-witted observers and commentators of the hippie movement connected Jack Kerouac to this new generation. Their rationale: he wrote about hitchhiking, jazz and marijuana smoking, and he was a notorious beatnik, so he must be the patriarch of the hippies—never mind if those of "his" tribe never heard of *On the Road* or weren't clear-eyed enough to make a sustained reading of it. In reality, when Kerouac died in 1969, he would have been as likely to invite a rabid dog into his house as he would a flower child. But the fabricated reality is more potent, so Kerouac remains another unjustly maligned author.) LSD, speed, STP, angel dust, animal tranquilizers—these were on and in everybody's lips. Rock music, like illegal drugs, became big business; attendance records set by one event were typically smashed by the following extravaganza (from which several didn't return in their right minds and some not at all, e.g. the Altamont Rock Festival); every album had to sell at least a million copies or it wasn't any good. "Free love!" was the cry (VD was the result). American hippies reversed the trend of generations and went East: air travel to Europe was amazingly cheap by today's standards, so off they went to Sweden to escape the draft or to Amsterdam to escape reality with the ubiquitous drugs.

When history is considered in this manner, it is not unlike a collection of photographs taken by a person on vacation—the now-classic slide shows or seemingly endless photo albums that so many bad jokes have made famous. The photographer shoots pictures of whatever is the most colorful. Ephemeral or underlying beauty is passed over. Nothing less than the spectacular or socially important is aimed at. There are two approaches in this type of photography. In one, Mom, Dad and/or the kids are front and center; the object (the Washington Monument or Old Faithful) serves as background. In the other, the object is central, as if the camera's viewfinder is the scope on a rifle: the scene will be shot, then stuffed and preserved by the taxidermist at the Fotomat. These photographers take pictures only of the types of scenes that appear on postcards. There is nothing particularly personal about the photos; even the ones with family members are only to prove that they were there. There are no subtleties, just scenery.

If an outsider were to try to construct anything about another's vacation from the photographic record, only a bare-bone itinerary would result. There would be nothing about the people involved, no information concerning why they went where they did or what happened to them when they were there. The old clichés "Every picture tells a story" and "A picture is worth a thousand words" have, as most saws, only a partial truth at their bases. The viewer of the pictures wants more information, which is why home slide shows are always accompanied by an irrepressible commentary and why books of photographs typically include an introduction and captions.

The photograph is a motif in Evan Hunter's *Love, Dad.* Click: here's Woodstock. Click: this is what a posh brownstone in New York City looks like inside. Click: these are hippies in Amsterdam. Click... click... click... Hunter's novel is vacation-photo history of the late 1960's and early 70's: many gaudy scenes and no nuances. It has more in common with a reconstructed itinerary than with a fully constructed narrative.

As a writer, Hunter is more than an amateur. Indeed, there are 15 novels listed across from the title page, along with two short-story collections, four children's books and four screenplays.

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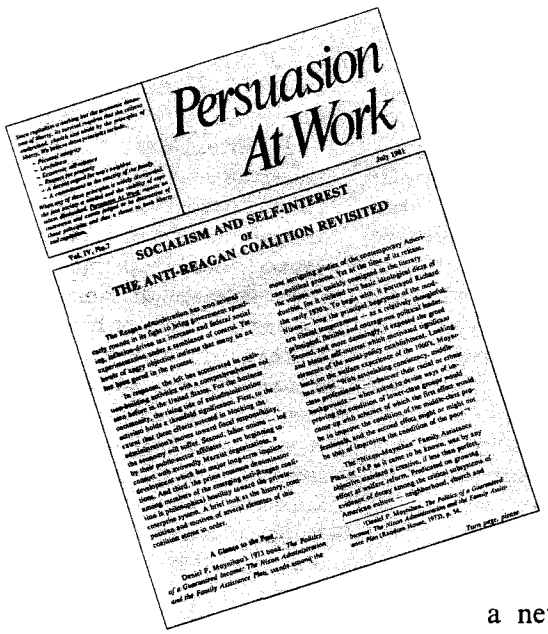
Persuasion At Work

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And what's not indicated is the fact that Evan Hunter is a.k.a. Ed McBain, prolific pen of the "87th Precinct Series." Ignoring the McBain books, Hunter's most widely known work is *The Blackboard Jungle* (1954), the steamy story of a New York City voc-ed high school.

In *Love, Dad,* Hunter brings things more up to date (he even nostalgically refers to the filmed version of *The Blackboard Jungle* and attributes its use of Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" as being the tocsin that alerted youth to rock-and-roll) and leaps up several social classes. No longer does he write of the dirty, deadly streets and school hallways of New York, of the outcasts and misfits that give meaning to the word *toughs.* This novel has as its center Rutledge, Connecticut, a town that provides the main characters with good, liberal New York City Establishment neighbors. The streets are clean in Rutledge but, as everybody knows, the dirt is on the other side of the front doors. Enter vacationer Hunter, camera slung around his neck. He takes some shots of the fictional family, some where they are central, some of the scenery. But at work or play, the Croft family is on a vacation from moral responsibility.

The Dad of the title is James "Jamie" Croft, who makes his living as a free-lance photographer. The offspring is his only child, Melissa, Lissie. And in keeping with the cutesy diminutives, Mommie Constance is called Connie. (Goldilocks in this tale also spoils things: her name is Joanna.)

Basically, Hunter uses a split-screen approach so he can present parallel development, or, more accurately, parallel regression, though he would use the former term. The objects of interest are Jamie and Lissie. Jamie is 42 when the novel opens in 1960. He has a beautiful wife, daughter and house. He enjoys what he does for a living. He is handsome. But when all of the gothic-novel embellishments are stripped away, when he is observed as objectively as possible (events are filtered through his consciousness, even though the novel is written in the omniscient voice; that is, Hunter seems to identify with Jamie, so the reader is forced to a certain degree of empathy), a flaw is visible. To lift a metaphor from Shakespeare: Jamie has the blood of goats and monkeys coursing through his veins; he is too lusty for Connie.

Lissie is 17 at the opening. She is a sweet girl who is exclusively concerned with her bustline development (the lack thereof). She doesn't smoke, drink or swear. Lissie is indulged, spoiled, by her father. Connie is comparatively indifferent: Lissie was the millstone around Connie's neck that didn't allow her the career that she wanted.

With this setup, things predictably fall into place. Jamie wants to have sex with Connie, but she is afraid she'll get pregnant again. A distracted Jamie fails to spoil Lissie at what becomes an artificially critical juncture. Lissie becomes alienated from Dad and Mom. Jamie falls: he gets a mistress. Lissie falls: she becomes a hippie. And the Kodachrome tours of having a mistress and being a hippie commence.

The bulk of the novel concerns Lissie as a hippie, a colorful albeit filthy figure. The transformation is rapid. The girl who didn't smoke cigarettes is suddenly smoking pot at Woodstock like an old pro. Flat-chested, normal Lissie didn't have any boyfriends, but faster than a 1/125-second shutter, Lissie the Hip is in nearly every sleeping bag and bed available. Click: Lissie in California. Click: Lissie digging the London scene. Click: Lissie undergoing—taking part in—what she considers "a silent, consensual rape" (!) perpetrated by a U.S. draft deserter in Amsterdam. Click: Lissie stoned out of her mind in India. Click: Lissie living with a black heroin addict in Boston. And in much the same way Jamie goes from happily married man to unhappily married man. From that state it's a quick hop to being a married man with a mistress, then to being a happily married man with a new wife. Dr. Jekyll has nothing on these people.

Hunter provides little believable motivation for any of these transformations. And it is this that makes his novel like a stranger's vacation photos. That is, given the premise of a vacation in Hawaii, it's a sure thing that there will be pictures of hula girls, Diamond Head, Waikiki, etc. They are inevitable. So given the fact that Lissie becomes a hippie in 1969, it's inevitable that her peregrination will lead her to all of the then-hot spots. It's almost as if Hunter wants to show that he is "with it," that he knows and understands the hippie generation just as he did the youths of the days of *The Blackboard Jungle.* Hunter goes too far; he identifies with drug smoking and casual copulation to such a degree that he comes to condone it. For example:

Native Dimwittedness in America

Here is an Associated Press report on a Grand Rapids high-school student's supreme spiritual bliss, as recorded during the opening of former President Ford's mausoleum, officially known as the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum in Michigan:

'I shook hands with Debby Boone . . . look at this hand. She touched it right there.' □

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> There was a great deal of hashish in Amsterdam. The kids called it hash as though it were as innocuous as a dish of chopped meat and potatoes served over the counter of a greasy spoon restaurant.
>
> And perhaps it was. Marijuana or its various derivatives was the least concern of anyone in Amsterdam.

And it's of little concern to the novelist; indeed, it's presented as being okay. Lissie, no matter how depraved she acts, still comes across as being a good girl, Daddy's girl, because she never sticks a needle in her arm. And it's okay that Jamie dumps his wife because Joanna really does love him, and besides, Hunter implies, just as Lissie and her generation had to "find themselves," Jamie did, too, and his marriage was just a bum trip. Jamie doesn't even talk to his wife about the marital problems he perceives, he just does his own thing.

The conflict in the novel comes from the father-daughter relationship: He doesn't like her lifestyle, she doesn't like his. He writes her simpering, sniveling letters; she abuses every trust and excoriates everything he loves. This goes on and on. In the penultimate chapter, Jamie finally tells Lissie that he never wants to see her again. If he had done that when he should have, the book would be about half its length.

But there is that photo-album inevitability: no two characters who have been sympathetically portrayed for some 400 pages are going to end up unhappy. So as a resolution Hunter rewards the characters. No one pays for the pain and suffering they've caused. There's a leap to 1979 and the "new" Jamie and Lissie. He's more hip and laid back; she's married to a dentist and shops at Saks (where they accidentally meet). All that's missing is a trailer reading: "And they lived happily ever after." Nothing like cheap sentimentality to close a novel that's full of values that shine like electroplated 10-K gold love beads on sale at the souvenir shop, next to the post cards.

Another snapshot from 1968: a Victorian-style home on Hill Street in Ann Arbor, not far from the University of Michigan campus. Within reside members of the Trans-Love Energies commune. If this commune is remembered in the annals of the counterculture, it will be for establishing the White Panther Party. As might be assumed, the White Panthers were similar to the Black Panthers; at least their badges were the same, a leaping panther, though the color scheme—for obvious reasons—was different. However, while the Black Panthers spent a great deal of time being involved in shootouts when they weren't flipping pancakes for their free-breakfast program, the White Panthers were nonviolent; they were all growl and no bite. Admittedly, leading White Panther members would carry rifles and wear bandoliers, but that had more in common with Halloween than revolution. One White Panther had a federal warrant out on him (this was a rare instance of violence; he took part in a bombing), and he was caught when he was stopped for littering.

The Hill Street establishment was big on rock-and-roll, and it even had its own house band, The MC5. The liner notes to The MC5's first record album were written by John Sinclair, "Minister of Information" of the Party. (Sinclair later became a minor celebrity in the hippie world: he was incarcerated for the possession of marijuana and no less a personage than John Lennon came to Detroit to perform on Sinclair's behalf.) Part of the liner notes read:

> We are a lonely desperate people, pulled apart by the killer forces of capitalism and competition, and we need the music to hold us together. Separation is doom. We are free men and we demand a free music, a free high energy source that will drive us wild into the streets of America yelling and screaming and tearing down everything that would keep people slaves.

Trick or treat?

One of the comments that a member of The MC5 mutters on this album (which includes a song praising the 1967 Detroit riots) is "I'm not black, but sometimes I wish that I wasn't white." That idea apparently got to the Ministers of the Party, and they realized that by so clearly differentiating themselves from their "brothers," the Black Panthers, they were dooming themselves through separation. One solution, I suppose, would be to stick with the animal metaphor and call themselves the Zebra Party. Instead, they called themselves the Rainbow Peoples Party, and they replaced the leaping white panther with a marijuana leaf superimposed over a red star. Drugs and the Viet Cong, that was the ticket. (I'm sure that if Evan Hunter had known about the group, he would have had Lissie Croft join it.)

The Chaneysville Incident by David Bradley has absolutely nothing to do with so-called parties named after animals, nor does it include a single rock-and-roll band. It is a novel which describes a historian's search for the reason behind his father's mysterious death: was it suicide, murder or an accident? The approach taken in the novel brings to mind a comment made by Robin W. Winks in the introduction to his *The Historian as Detective: Essays on Evidence* (Harper & Row, 1968): "The historian must collect, interpret and then explain his evidence by methods which are not greatly different from those techniques employed by the detective, or at least the detective of fiction." John Washington, the narrator of *The*

> "[In *The Chaneysville Incident*] the skill with which the narrator's attitudes are checked and balanced . . ."
>
> —*New York Times*

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Chaneysville Incident, a professor of history, carefully details his thorough investigation. The novel is the history book that culminates his research. It is a laudatory scheme, and the prose style is workmanlike.

However, while reading the novel, I felt like a person who accidentally enters a room wherein people are vilifying him. John Washington is black—I'm not—and John Washington is a racist.

Naturally, since *The Chaneysville Incident* is historically oriented, the whole disgusting, depressing story of slavery is recounted. And white people are excoriated for continuing to hold blacks down. Bradley presents an interpretation of black history based on economics; he buttresses his arguments with everything from the credits and debits of the slave trade to the fact that sanitary facilities on buses aren't as nice as those on jet planes (the point here, of course, is that only blacks ride buses and that they never fly, therefore the bathrooms on buses are deliberately lousy so that the blacks are humiliated). Robin W. Winks writes, "The historian is not particularly interested in retribution. . . . There are a few who enter a room with all guns blazing, and some few who think they are judge and jury. . . ." Bradley's fictional historian is among the few.

Which brings me back to The MC5 and the White Panthers. Their ancestors didn't come from Africa, and there is nothing they can do about that. But what they could and did do was feel guilty. Thus the comment on the record album and the Party name change. The Black Panthers, as far as I know, have never felt compelled to effect a title change.

But it isn't just those who spout hokum and dress up in silly costumes who feel this ridiculous guilt, this feeling of responsibility for something (i.e. slavery) in which they had absolutely no part. And let's not hear any more about the oppression of minorities in this country. Much of what is said on that score (like Bradley's buses and planes) is just so much nonsense, calculated to do nothing but cause trouble.

How many have the squeamish feeling of guilt? Obviously enough for a publisher like Harper & Row to print Bradley's book. Reading it, I suppose, would be like wearing a hair shirt.

Consider this. What would happen if a person whose "roots" were in Europe wrote a novel that blasted blacks the way that Bradley's novel blasts whites? You can be sure that no leading New York publishing house would get near it. They'd treat the manuscript like Three Mile Island, even if the writer were the most talented person to come along in years. And if the novel were to be published (probably by a small press), one of two things would happen to it. It would be totally ignored and thereby effectively condemned to collect dust on store shelves, or it would be lambasted by critics so fiercely that anyone who picked up the book would feel like a filthy pervert.

If John Sinclair (and Abraham Lincoln, for that matter) is correct and "Separation is doom," then as long as books like the *The Chaneysville Incident* are published, race relations will not improve, they will deteriorate. The book can cause some people—black or white—to feel anger, sadness, guilt, desperation, or a combination of all or some of them. Such a combination, given the conditions of high unemployment and rising prices, inevitably leads to hatred. Then comes violence, real violence: yelling and screaming and tearing down . . . and death. □

Technique and the Ecology of Choice

Thomas McGuane: *An Outside Chance: Essays on Sport;* Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

Orville Schell: *'Watch Out for the Foreign Guests!'* Pantheon Books; New York.

Lowell Edmunds: *The Silver Bullet: The Martini in American Civilization;* Greenwood Press; Westport, Connecticut.

by Gordon M. Pradl

By all rights, the machine (and its instantaneous progeny) was going to set us free—any generation now, any day now. At last we would control our own destinies. With science and technology exploding the boundaries of our knowledge, both through time and space, possible connections and options began to multiply exponentially, and the range of possibilities for self-definition and personal expression appeared endless. But alas, something came unhinged, some code got reversed, and freedom dissipated into exposure: we exposed the fact that we had lost our sense of an integrated identity and thus had no basis on which to choose and value our futures. We had reduced ourselves to slick *means* desperately searching for justifying *ends,* while "technique" rushed blindly onward in the service of amorphous bureaucratic slogans: "the better life."

Such ponderous issues seem far removed from flycasting for brook trout in Michigan, carousing with the cynical new counterculture version of red Chinese youth at the Peace Café in Peking or sipping the restorative seven-o'clock martini in ceremonial fashion throughout America's bedroom communities. Yet in their diverse and idiosyncratic ways McGuane, Schell and Edmunds force us to reconsider central questions regarding the phenomenon of *choice* as it characterizes both our public and private lives—questions that need exploring should we entertain any hope

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of regaining momentum in our own affairs, or realigning reality with the illusions that mark our present condition.

An Outside Chance is ostensibly a collection of 18 essays on sport in the great outdoors—fully half of these essays relate a variety of angling adventures, and the others include tales of motorbike-riding, cow-roping, trail-horse-riding, sailing, hunting and golf. But McGuane's low-keyed celebration of man against nature curiously sets us to thinking about how technique has restricted rather than broadened the body knowledge we used to be able to integrate with what was going on in our heads.

Describing a fishing event in San Francisco, McGuane pinpoints the dilemma of the modern angler:

> Fishing for sport is itself an act of racial memory, and in places like the Golden Gate Club it moves toward the purer symbolism of tournaments. The old river-spawned fish have been replaced by pellet-fed and planted simulacra of themselves. Now even the latter seem to be vanishing in favor of plastic target rings and lines depicting increments of distance. It's very cerebral.

The sustaining moral energy derived from the movement and change of the natural landscape, which lies dramatically juxtaposed to the "civilized" forms of urban centers, is lost once simulation and symbol become total surrogates for immediate experiencing. And next, like seemingly all our competitive team sports, angling and hunting will be reduced to the level of the proliferating push-button computer game. Such transformations deny us the visceral correlatives so necessary to judge our human achievements. For what disappears when sport becomes increasingly mechanized, when, in the process of enacting sports, creature comforts and plastic entertainment become the organizing priority, is our cognizance of the purpose behind the pursuit. Despite surface appearances to the contrary, our goal is not to triumph over our prey in a literal sense (hook and catch the fish, stalk and kill the deer), for in an age of high technology the results of such a contest, were we to employ all the vast array of firepower at our disposal, would be a foregone conclusion; rather, our goal is to internalize a deeper understanding of the prey, to reach a harmony of respect and equality, so that these ethical qualities which finally determine our character might inform our behavioral choices in a variety of social settings.

Images of pristine relatedness abound throughout McGuane's pages. When he talks about Chink's Benjibaby, a cow horse who hated "confinement, machinery, and the twentieth century," we are forced to recognize patterns beyond our own selfish conventions:

> The roaring crowd . . . prevented Pat from even hearing the signal that his run was over. People walked toward them across the arena to tell him that the time was up. But Pat and the crazy mare were head to head with a single cow, absolutely alone in an old dance. A cowboy's horse had come home.

Or when McGuane explains to his son the only "acceptable *Realpolitik*" for a true angler, we see how choice is a function of delicate environmental relationships—upset certain balances and our range of options becomes surprisingly diminished:

> . . . if the trout are lost, smash the state. More than any other fish, trout are dependent upon the ambience in which they are caught. It would be hard to say whether or not it is the trout or the angler who is more sensitized to the degeneration of habitat, but probably it is the trout. At the first signs of deterioration, the otherwise vigorous trout just politely quits, as though to say, 'If that's how you want it . . .' Meanwhile, the angler qualitatively lapses in citizenship. Other fishermen may toss their baits into the factory shadows. The trout fisherman who doesn't turn dangerously unpatriotic just politely quits, like the trout.

How essential an ingredient of true intelligence is moral correspondence, McGuane's itinerary of sporting episodes makes manifest by indirection. The analogy to the social emphysema with which the pollution of lib culture has stricken us should come as no surprise here. We need more than plastic target rings to exercise our moral mus-

In the Mail

The Controversy of Zion **by Douglas Reed; Bloomfield Books; Sudbury, Suffolk, England.** A routine, virulently antisemitic tract (based on the primitive premise that there is only one source of all mankind's predicaments), whose only distinction is that it comes not from Moscow or Nuremberg but from England. Among Reed's revelations: Jesus was not a Jew and Winston Churchill was a card-carrying Zionist.

"The Honorable Ronald W. Reagan Remarks on The Hoover Institution"; The Hoover Institution; Washington, D.C. The text of remarks by President-elect Reagan at a dinner in Washington, D.C. January 1981.

Word Memory Power in 30 Days **by Peter Funk with Barry Tarshis; Delacorte Press; New York.** A revolutionary approach to vocabulary-building by the author of the venerable *Reader's Digest* column "It Pays to Increase Your Word Power."

Sadat's Strategy **by Paul Eidelberg; Dawn Books; Quebec, Canada.** An unusual examination of Egyptian President Sadat's strategy and motives concerning peace in the Middle East, and Israel in particular.

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cles. The decline of outdoor sport in this sense is but an early warning signal that having things done for us is not the road to autonomy.

The tyranny of a different kind of technique, cultural amnesia, is represented in Orville Schell's journalistic account of the recent opening of China to Western capitalism, *'Watch Out for the Foreign Guests!'* Just as an unchecked reliance on the mechanical imitation of natural phenomena robs us of autonomy, so too when the past is no longer present with us the new overwhelms because we are stripped of any moral context with which to judge (I almost said "monitor") our decisions, our relationship to the body politic. One of Schell's informants puts the problem this way:

> We Chinese have traditionally been cut off from outside influences. I think we often resist foreign ideas at first. But when foreign influences finally do make an impact, we don't seem to know where to stop. We don't seem to know how to balance. Suddenly some people want to get rid of everything Chinese and have everything foreign.

What is our own response today in America to cultural forces that would swamp generations of accumulated wisdom (as opposed to prejudice)?

When outside influences dictate our choices we need to question what inner powers have been abandoned. For choice, after all, is a matter of identity, and identity leans heavily on harmonious transactions among self and others. China's fall from grace ("grace" conceived, of course, entirely from China's own perspective) points to a peculiar moral dilemma endemic to totalitarian societies: when initiative flows downward rather than surges upward along the social/political hierarchy, we witness the ablation of a people's ethical resolve. Indeed, Schell wonders "... how a people once so involved in using their history as a guide can now seem so disconnected from it; how they can start anew without either truly taking stock or losing nerve over the series of self-confessed failures which lie behind them."

The point of the cultural drama being played out here has little to do with the incompatibility of our ideological systems. Instead, to understand China's dilemma is to become aware of the mounting pressures on the integrity of our own *connectedness,* and thus to realize the extent to which our choices in life result from the continuity of an earned identity or are merely jerk-kneed responses to seductive expediency. The image of a group of Chinese youngsters scrambling after some Polaroid snapshots dispensed magically by an American tourist graphically illustrates how fragile is our autonomy in such tempting situations. Indeed, the episode forces us to question, along with Schell, "how the Chinese will ever keep their minds on their revolution and maintain a belief in their own strength if they are constantly subjected to such distracting demonstrations of Western consumer prowess." Success lies in getting us to forget our reasons (as opposed to our excuses) for purchasing the product in the first place.

All too many of the character transformations Schell describes are startling, and equally depressing, for they leave us merely with a caricature of what liberty might hold forth for the individual:

> For Wang to sit here in this den of Peking iniquity, boasting with insouciance that his father got him into the army 'through the back door,' is something akin to the Reverend Billy Graham suddenly announcing that he has joined a cult of Satan worshippers.

Here self-expression and the new freedom have become a pretext for self-indulgence. Yet, how ironic it is that instances of such "self-indulgence" yield a self-righteous "I told you so" response in our minds.

The Western community has always been skeptical of what motivated Maoist China. It is sad to think that it takes China's emerging problems of crime and corruption, unemployment and inflation to establish a common bond of understanding and recognition. China's failures should not be viewed smugly by America; rather, these failures should give us pause to scrutinize the shortcomings of our own institutions. One of the introspective women Schell talked with in Peking locates the central issue of *choice* that we share with the Chinese: "You know, I still think about that contradiction, between the need to serve one's country and one's self. And I still don't know how to make the two harmonious." Freedom has little to do with the individual satisfying externally stimulated desires; it has everything to do with responsibility. Responsibility is choice connected with a past. Lib culture rejoices whenever another tie is broken —all in the name of progress.

The self-social paradox—with which neither the left nor the right has adequately dealt since the cogent theorizing of our unequaled founding fathers—suggests a final technique galloping out of control: symbolic behavior and its felonious drift toward invisibility and the unassailable. The gestures of our lives roll merrily along, their content seemingly hidden from us. The more these patterns of social exchange and status become routinized, the more our

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choices become constrained. The trick is to keep things swirling from the outside so the inner sources of meaning need never be faced—the ultimate commercial heaven. Not all outer forms, of course, are to be condemned; rather, it is our powerless relationship with them that needs examining, a relationship that binds us helplessly in its grip even when we wish to alter our course of events.

The vast panorama of the seemingly insignificant martini is at last given its full due in a semiotic study by Lowell Edmunds, sometime professor of classics at Boston College. In *The Silver Bullet* Professor Edmunds dissects, with scholarly wit that knows no bounds, the range of symbolic meanings—intended, unintended and otherwise—that are brought into play whenever the preeminent American cocktail appears in our midst:

> The form of the martini, consists, then, of coldness, dryness, clarity and purity. It is a simple, strict, one might say puritanical, drink. Its pleasure, which is not voluptuous but astringent, can only be expressed by oxymoron—sensuous coldness, opulent dryness, mysterious clarity, alluring purity.

In short, the urbane and refined martini is able to make such penetrating statements about us because it is "disruptive of civilized values," indeed, suggesting such values are only a veneer.

We need to see our behavior turned back on itself—scrutinize it in context—because it usually marks a humbling ambiguity in which all appearances are not necessarily so benign or innocent. Semiotic study involves the teasing out of the landscape of opposites that the symbol system is hiding. For instance, with all the status that supposedly accrues to the martini, the well-heeled alcoholic can mask the true nature of his yearnings by going completely *dry* and covering up his olives with straight gin. And so we initially label the behavior sophisticated rather than calling the man a drunk.

When such behavior is merely routine, *choice* is thrown out of control, but we realize this only if we occasionally apply a literary, critical stance toward life. Such a stance on the part of Professor Edmunds reveals a case of mixed motives in our cultural undertakings—a dangerous condition because of what gets left unstated.

> The ultimate ambiguity of the Martini, on which all others rest, is its dangerous purity, its simultaneous clarity and blackness, its civilized barbarism and the barbaric civility.

The bonding of the martini drinker to his caste (it is an upper not lower, male not female, urban not rural, Wasp not ethnic, American not European, drink) suggests a curious withholding of self—in a sense the game is over, the winners predetermined. Who would have guessed what a tipped glass might expose about the crosscurrents of American life?

When we deny our natural connections, forget the hold our cultural past has on our future, or ignore the manifest content of our symbolic behavior we risk eliminating the art characteristics of our existence. Perhaps our current obsession with avoiding real art is bound up with our civilization's mission to avoid pain at all cost. It is the pain of choice that allows for self-recognition. We find out (define) who we are through these choices; thus our flight away from such self-energy-expanding activity signals the latest nirvana—the anesthesia of outer technique. To get back to a chosen self we must be willing to invest new inner forms of suffering. □

In the Mail

Looking Back **by Edwin J. Feulner, Jr.; The Heritage Foundation; Washington, D.C.** A collection of columns written prior to January 1981 addressing such problems as government bureaucracy, inflation, radical environmentalism and other areas of liberal policy failure.

Society, State, & Schools: A Case for Structural and Confessional Pluralism **by Gordon Spykman et al.; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan.** The results of a study by scholars in various areas of education, and a pragmatic assessment of possible solutions to the loss of pluralism in American public education.

The Cape Route: Imperiled Western Lifeline **by Robert J. Hanks/USN (Ret.); Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis; Cambridge, Massachusetts.** An analysis of the maritime anatomy of the Cape of Good Hope and the possible dangers it could present to international shipping.

A Bonhoeffer Legacy: Essays in Understanding **edited by A. J. Klassen; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan.** A collection of essays on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's thoughts on such subjects as theological method, history, religion and secularization and ethics by several religious scholars.

Does Big Business Rule America? **edited by Robert Hessen; Ethics and Public Policy Center; Washington, D.C.** Seven critical essays on Charles Lindblom's *Politics and Markets* by James Q. Wilson, David Stockman and others.

"The Transition to a New Administration" by Edwin Meese III; The Hoover Institution; Stanford, California. Meese's analysis of the transition period, from a speech given in January 1981.

Economic Freedom in the Eighties: For the Individual, the Nation, the World **edited by Paul C. Goelz; St. Mary's University Press; San Antonio, Texas.** A volume containing the proceedings of the Second National Symposium on the Philosophy of Free Enterprise conducted by St. Mary's University.

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COMMENDABLES

Conradiana

Roger Tennant: ***Joseph Conrad: A Biography;*** Atheneum; New York.

Few writers have probed the "lightless depths" of human existence more sagaciously than Joseph Conrad, that self-proclaimed—albeit somewhat ironically—"Pole, Catholic, and Gentleman" who borrowed the English language and repaid his debt with a body of writing that any nation would be proud to claim. In such books as *Lord Jim, The Nigger of the Narcissus* and *Under Western Eyes,* Conrad altered man's awareness of the forces that surge beneath the veneer of rationality. So deeply have Conrad's perceptions sunk into our consciousness that the term "heart of darkness" has become almost a cliché as a metaphor for evil.

Roger Tennant explores the configuration of Conrad's life, seeking to show how Conrad adapted specific aspects of his own experience to the needs of his art. Tennant mercifully eschews the chic psychologizing that has become *de rigueur* among biographers. Too often, literary biographers produce massive tomes which catalogue the minutiae of a writer's life without illuminating the delicate intersection between life and art, knowledge of which enriches one's understanding of the literary craft; Joseph Blotner's tedious two-volume work on William Faulkner illustrates the disastrous consequences of this approach. Tennant shuns the pack-rat school of scholarship, opting instead for concision and skillful selection. In this respect, his *Joseph Conrad* invites favorable comparison with V. S. Pritchett's spare and elegant study of the life of Ivan Turgenev. □

Nature's Unfalsified Grandeur

Peter Matthiessen: ***Sand Rivers;*** Viking Press; New York.

Weariness possessed us as we turned to Peter Matthiessen's *Sand Rivers,* an account of his journey in 1979 into the Selous Game Reserve in southern Tanzania. After Matthiessen's previous book, *The Snow Leopard,* we expected more of his excursions into the dreariness of Zen Buddhism. How Zen could be worked into ruminations on wallowing hippopotami we did not know, but once an American dips his toe into the turbid waters of Zen he tends to plunge in headlong.

This alone would quench the strongest of desires to learn about the Selous, but on top of that, we dreaded what Matthiessen would probably have to say about politics and society in contemporary Tanzania. Anyone who follows the doings of the political/literary set knows that Julius Nyerere's socialist experiment dazzles American leftists. For them, Nyerere's blend of socialism and traditional African ways has illuminated the Heart of Darkness. Tanzania represents yet another attempt by the left to find Utopia: visions of the masses discussing Marx while weaving baskets dance through many a dizzy American head. Could Matthiessen resist the temptation to pit the glories of Tanzanian socialism against the iniquities of capitalistic America?

Peter Matthiessen seems to know that hippopotami do not lend themselves to Zen musings after all. He does not use the Selous as a pretext to bore one with factitious meditations on the Big Questions, nor does he embarrass one with the gushy maunderings that pass for nature-writing among lovers of small furry animals. He knows that behind the often-prettified façade of multicolored birds and friendly old elephants there lies a world red in tooth and claw. "One night another hyena clan made its own kill on the far side of the Luwegu, filling the night with excited whoopings that turned to high eerie giggling and laughter. Out there in the dark where the hyenas were tearing the wide-eyed victim to pieces, those crazy noises would be ringing in its ears." Nature freaks who derive their idea of a wild animal from outings to the zoo and weekend camping trips had best reread those two sentences.

Of the Tanzanian foray into socialism Matthiessen has little to say, and most of that reflects poorly on Nyerere's regime. Matthiessen's eyes and ears are too sharp—and too honest—to allow him to romanticize Tanzania. From Brian Nicholson, former warden of the Selous Reserve, Matthiessen learned of the decline of the Game Department under an independent Tanzania. Bureaucrats and political hacks who care not a whit for the nation's wildlife have turned an efficient game-management program into a shambles. Ineptitude, low morale and mandatory hostility to whites have nearly destroyed what Nicholson and other defenders of African wildlife labored so assiduously to maintain. Nicholson renders the verdict on the Workers' Committees that displaced the old management of the game reserves: "Like so many of these socialist ideas, the theory is all very well, but it just doesn't work."

Spared from Zen meditations and the usual mendacity about Tanzanian socialism, one can simply enjoy Matthiessen's account—enhanced by Hugo van Lawick's superlative photographs—of his safari into the most remote and uncharted of the African wildlife reserves. (JJT) □

In the Mail

Creation, Science & Theology **by W. A. Whitehouse; Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; Grand Rapids, Michigan.** An examination and refutation of Karl Barth's doctrine of creation, and an exploration of the relationship between theology and science.

Cosmologies of Consciousness **by E. C. Barksdale; Schankman Publishing Co.; Cambridge, Massachusetts.** A novel approach to the study of consciousness.

"Critical Issues: Easy Germany, Marxist Mission in Africa" by John M. Starrels; The Heritage Foundation; Washington, D.C. An examination of possible East German participation in the turmoil in Africa.

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IN FOCUS

Divine Propaganda

John Paul Pritchard: *A Literary Approach to the New Testament;* University of Oklahoma Press; Norman, Oklahoma.

Dr. Pritchard, a professor of English at the University of Oklahoma, seeks to introduce and illuminate the New Testament for college students in a much-needed work, given the Biblical illiteracy of this generation. His approach is a curious mixture of reverent belief and negative skepticism. Since he assumes that the Bible's ghostwriters were seeking to persuade their readers, Pritchard classifies the apostolic record as "propaganda."

Calling the New Testament "propaganda" is hardly the way to win the hearts of contemporary students, but Pritchard sets out to show how the Biblical authors artistically used appealing facts to win audience sympathy. Nevertheless, they also straightforwardly presented controversial ideas — for example, the idea of a plurality in the godhead to an audience of monotheistic Jews. He stresses the writers' accuracy yet insists they were not writing biography. The approach he takes is safe for someone in the shelter of academe. But it will not satisfy the conservative Biblical scholar who trusts the historic garb in which the message, or gospel, is enshrined. The very fact that the writers were unafraid to raise serious and controversial issues makes one hesitant to accept Pritchard's carefully qualified ascription of "propaganda" to the New Testament. Surely propagandists got their reputation by distorting or concealing facts, and when did they ever enjoy the reputation of bringing "good news"?

The book's informative comments, helpful as they may be to Biblically illiterate college students, are weakened by some eyebrow-raising misstatements. The earliest copies of the New Testament were not written "more than a century later" than the autographs; the capital-letter manuscripts are lettered or numbered besides being "named"; and textual criticism is emphatically not carried on by "intuitive insight." Remarks like these weaken the confidence of the theologically initiated despite Pritchard's otherwise-useful remarks.

Christianity was a revolutionary movement, and part of its impact depended on the total commitment of the original hearers. Today's hearers accept what they like and criticize the rest, and Pritchard is no exception. (RWM) □

WASTE OF MONEY

On Southern Feminine Wiles

Anne Rivers Siddons: *Fox's Earth;* Simon & Schuster; New York.

by Lindy Ellingwood

What we have here is Tara revisited, with Decade of Women overtones. *Fox's Earth* attempts to parallel *Gone with the Wind* but, while Margaret Mitchell paints a vivid historical mural, Anne Rivers Siddons essays a new feminist statement, mostly to the effect that the traditional suppression of women is a matriarchal rather than a patriarchal phenomenon.

The Scarlett O'Hara in this novel is Ruth Steed Yancey, who uses her cunning and beauty to remain for four generations mistress of Fox's Earth, a gracious home in Sparta, Georgia. Ruth's actions, unlike Scarlett's, arise not from love for a man but from madness. Scarlett fights to keep Tara for her family and becomes a prosperous businesswoman in the process. Ruth's transformation from ragged mill child to velvet-gloved matriarch of the Fox family and sharpest

landowner in Sparta is inspired by the ravings of her somewhat crazy mother, Pearl.

Perhaps because Ruth and her parents are insane, neither Ruth nor most of the other characters are developed convincingly. While Ruth's sweet exterior conceals "a heart full of lashing snakes," neither she nor her family show more commonplace emotions; they never laugh with or even at each other. The undercurrent of Ruth's stultifying influence on her children and grandchildren is evident, but even a madwoman's influence should not, to our mind, account for the absence of essential human traits in these women. It does in Ms. Siddons' work.

In lieu of essential human traits, Ms. Siddons focuses on the sexual careers of her women. Pearl treats her young daughter Ruth to some bathroom descriptions that include Pearl's view of sexual principles:

> A woman is weak, a woman don't have nothing, a woman is a man's toy and a man's slave . . . but a woman has one thing that can git anything a man has, if she uses it right. And that's what's between her legs.

Ruth follows this moral precept to the hilt, and duly bestows it on her own female offspring—and this is all Ms. Siddons' novel is about until Nell, one of Ruth's granddaughters, breaks out of the symbolic cage of Fox's Earth. Nell is a sort of symbol of the current tension between "career woman" and "soft feminine thing." As she becomes a respected Southern novelist in spite of her grandmother's disapprobation, she breaks free from both the land Ruth spent her life acquiring and holding for Nell and from that special feminine docility Ruth cultivated in her as the means to keep that land.

Thus, throughout generations, the Fox women develop from outwardly submissive manipulators to productive and amoral modern women. Which Ms. Siddons believes is the valid history of womanhood in America. □

Miss Ellingwood is on the staff of the Chronicles.

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Arthur the Bedbug, Tepid Corpses & Other Stories

***Arthur;* Written and directed by Steve Gordon; Orion Pictures.**

***Body Heat;* Written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan; A Ladd Company Release (through Warner Brothers).**

by Eric Shapearo

Nothing better exemplifies the final demise of the Hollywood film culture than the failure of a trifle. A trifle of a movie may rise to an unexpected status provided it possesses one ingredient—charm. A charmless trifle is in the category of junk, and *Arthur*—widely advertised by the venal mercenary establishment reviewers from the *Chicago Tribune* to *Women's Wear Daily* as a humorous, graceful romp—is an utterly charmless piece of trash perfumed with a dimestore cologne of an allegedly sophisticated *mise en scene.* It's vulgar, banal, primitive, on occasion repulsive, always boring and pretentious in its incessant effort to present ugliness and platitude as comicality. It's horrendously cute and boorishly coy. It amounts to two hours of obnoxiously mincing grossness. Although it is a story of rich Wasps and Italian urban populism, beneath its surface it pushes the Yiddish, Lower East Side theater's noisy corniness without the latter's authenticity, sentimentality and painful wit. In short—it's a sorry heap of cinematic manure sold as a heart-warming escapist comedy. But escapism must be winsome, like the screwball pictures of the 1930's; if it is not, it stinks with all the odors of the borscht-belt farceurs' aesthetics.

We seldom dwell on actors in these pages, but *Arthur* requires a few words on that matter. Charm and winsomeness once meant Clark Gable, Gary Cooper, young Henry Fonda, Cary Grant. In *Arthur* charm is diffused by a certain Mr. Dudley Moore, a new Hollywood male idol, who has all the looks and personality of a cocaine-drugged bedbug afflicted by an outburst of gonorrhea. But he's not the only one who represents allegedly high actorship there. The second is John Gielgud, giant of British stage and screen, who plays a quintessential English butler—a sort of Jeeves, if Jeeves had been marketed by Bloomingdale's. Mr. Gielgud does not act, he does shtick—as they used to say in the bars around Seventh Avenue and Broadway where the extras

hung out. His main source of humor is a four-letter word pronounced with an upper-class British accent. So much for the taste and inventiveness of *Arthur's* scriptwriter and director.

* * *

Body Heat is supposed to be film *noir.* What is a film or *roman noir* in the perception of the semieducated movie consumer, fed on popular movie criticism whose smart-alecky gurus in the newspapers and magazines review movies? It's a picture or thriller novel that depicts bad people and bad deeds that originate in an oppressive, menacing, often horror-ridden ambience created by the lower depths of a social reality shaped by rampant Darwinism (seedy bars, Los Angeles slums, San Francisco skid-row dwellings) or by excesses of climate (musty Southern mansions, malodorous in a stale heat wave), or by a relentlessly hyped, synthetic evil that needs neither motivation nor explanation. The more interesting practitioners of literature *noir* were James Cain and James Hadley Chase; Raymond Chandler, a novelist of deeper breadth and more complex sensibilities, certainly dabbled in the genre. In the movies a succession of respected directors, Hitchcock and Clouzot included, knew how to make out of motifs *noir* a lasting cinematic value. A lot could be said about the affinity between the *noir* manner and the melodrama of violence, or character vice, but this would lead us perhaps to Lady Macbeth or even Euripides—a futile notion when we only want to talk about *Body Heat.*

It's a story of an unmitigated feminine evil mercilessly flattened by the modern necessity to inject sexual activities. These requisite exertions are never intimated but are always made so explicit that they become mechanical, if not grotesque, puffing and perspiring, thereby pulling passion—the vehicle of wickedness—down to the level of a glandular exercise available in any porno movie house. The characters become pedestrian, petty, often repulsive and this, of course, promotes an evil allegedly engendered by unbearably hot Florida weather. A heat wave may certainly be a force which induces a lot of dermatological discomfort; however, it is a bit demonologized in *Body Heat,* thus making one ponder whether an air-conditioned space, or some meteorological relief, might not cancel the movie's plot. What should we, sane viewers, do with a dialogue in which a lawyer and a district attorney delight in laughter, merriment, exhilaration as they discuss a potential witness, a subteen girl who surprised the protagonists in an act of oral intercourse and whom the servants of the law now suppose has been traumatized by the sight of male sexual equipment? This is only a part of the

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Social Register

A new game is in town, and the town seems entranced by the unlimited thrills it holds for the wealthy and the influential. If it is ever mass marketed (which, of course, will not be for a while), it will be entitled "The Joy of Carnage." The rules are simple: if you are famous, powerful, bored, jaded, cynical, fashionable, adequately moneyed and notably liberal, you pick out a felon, a hoodlum, a criminal, a whore and declare him or her an intellectual, a genius, a poet, an artist, a philosopher and, first and foremost, a victim of American inhumanity. The big winner is to choose a murderer; the more bestial he is, the more admiration his (or her) sponsor receives from the enchanted literary-chic circles and high society of New York. Not that the game is entirely new—a couple of decades ago the big hit was a slovenly French deviate by the name of Genêt whom the refined consciences of the liberal culture promulgated as a saint. Recently, two prides of the Gotham cognoscenti—Mr. Norman Mailer, a flinty World War II correspondent (declared by the unified American left to be a serious writer), and Mr. Robert Silvers, the editor of the *New York Review of Books* and a dashing product of Brooks Bros. cum Herbert Marcuse's philosophical gangsterism—arranged a parole for a convicted killer in whom they detected all the supreme moral sensitivity and subtlety of feelings to which a modern American can pretend. Their *"quel coup!"* made people in Elaine's, Soho Charcuterie and the de la Renta salon green with envy. It seems, however, that soon thereafter their *trouvaille* monstrously slew an innocent man. The question remains unanswered: Did this small, bloody complication enhance Messrs. Mailer's and Silvers's status in New York's best social circles? We tend to believe that it did.

As faithful followers of the *grand milieu's* mores, we suggest that the game could be improved by indicting Messrs. Mailer and Silvers as accessories to manslaughter. What delicious suspense it would be to see them in court—Mr. Silvers fresh from his Madison Avenue clothier, Mr. Mailer in his slipshod countercultural threads (as befits a man who has to support countless progeny from innumerable, if legal, marriages).

* * *

And, naturally, the *New York Times* is no slouch when it comes to shining on the scene of intellectual elegance. In its book section, under the heading "Editors' Choice," we could (on August 16, 1981) read an entry:

> "In the Belly of the Beast," by Jack Henry Abbott. (Random House, $11.95.) The author's 20 years in American prisons; introduction by Norman Mailer.

The author is, of course, the new literary darling mentioned above who is suspected of having slit the throat of a harmless person. We will never get the chance to cease to admire the *New York Times Book Review's* editors' choices. What's even more depressing is that we won't ever reach their moral and intellectual refinement and be able to make such choices. Let's have a look—by dint of a few quotations from Mr. Mailer's introduction—at what the *New York Times Book Review's* literary, intellectual, moral and philosophical choices actually amount to:

> Out of Abbott's letters, however, came an intellectual, a radical, a potential leader, a man obsessed with a vision of more elevated human relations in a better world that revolution could forge. His mind, at its happiest, wanted to speak from his philosophical height across to yours. . . . It is that not only the worst of the young are sent to prison, but the best—that is, the proudest, the bravest, the most daring, the most enterprising, and the most undefeated of the poor. . . . If you can conceive of a society (it is very difficult these days) that is more concerned with the creative potential of violent young men than with the threat they pose to the suburbs, then a few solutions for future prisons may be there. Somewhere between the French Foreign Legion and some prodigious extension of Outward Bound may lie the answer, at least for all those juvenile delinquents who are drawn to crime as a positive experience—because it is more exciting, more meaningful, more mysterious, more transcendental, more religious than any other experience they have known.

We in America's midland only wish that Mr. Mailer and his ideological brethren at the *New York Review of Books* would, during the next social season, have an opportunity—in the streets of New York, or somewhere in the suburbs—to confront a few juvenile delinquents and share with them the exciting, meaningful, mysterious, transcendental, religious experience of throat-cutting. □

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SCREEN

continued from page 44

movie-makers' sense of intellectual and artistic tact. The very outcome of the mystery is sloppy—in contrast to the customary logical neatness of the *noir* mystery thrillers of the past, whose craftsmen would have considered it beneath their dignity to leave the main dénouement floating in a haze of dubious metaphysics.

* * *

***Clash of the Titans;* Written by Beverley Cross; Directed by Desmond Davis; United Artists.**

The drive-in movie is unlike any other form of entertainment as the viewer is, in a sense, simultaneously indoors and outdoors, private and public. Films shown at drive-ins should differ from those shown in conventional theaters in a very specific way: they should make sense to a viewer who has missed large portions of them. It is helpful if they are full of excitement that will keep the kids (often wearing pajamas and shoes so they can play on the playground below the screen before the first feature and snooze through the second) watching. The reason that these films must be understandable in an abbreviated form is that parents are usually busy cleaning up spilled cooked-at-home popcorn and other goodies and the other drive-in frequenters, the teen-agers, are busy in the back seat and don't come up for air too often.

Clash of the Titans is a drive-in film. It cannot be taken seriously in a room. Reasons: imagine a reinforced concrete statue of Maggie Smith robed like a Greek goddess that towers about 60 feet high. Further, picture the head of the statue broken off, on the ground, with Maggie Smith's talking face superimposed over the stone. Or Olivier as Zeus with a penchant for playing with Play-Doh. Or a vulture bigger than a '65 Cadillac. Long portions of this film can (and should) be missed without any loss of comprehension. (GSV) □

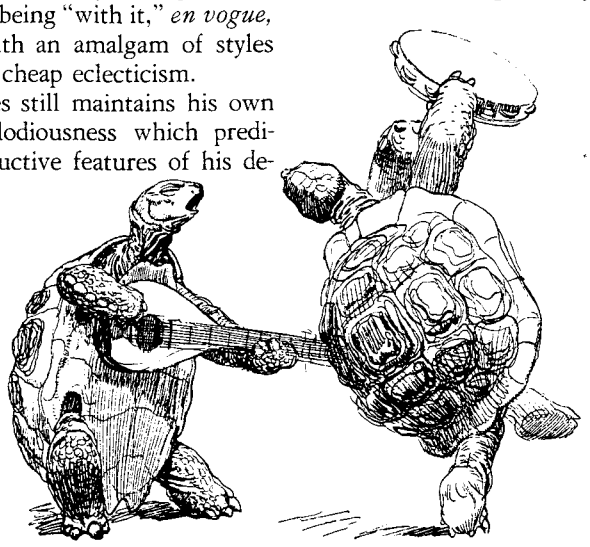
MUSIC

Mr. Ray Charles

We had a recent opportunity—after a long, almost existential interval—to listen in person to Mr. Ray Charles, whom we like and respect. We well remember the force of innovation he had when he burst on the jazz-pop scene in the 50's, the difference he immediately made, how firmly he assumed a role of a fresh voice—both literally and figuratively. But now we are a bit perplexed. At the peak of his superstardom and celebrity his charm, vivacity, musicalness, the excellence of his inflections and the inimitable intensity of his performance are still there, perhaps more impressive than ever—but the freshness is gone. What's worse, the disappearance of freshness is not a matter of overfamiliarity with Mr. Charles's persona and music. It's a matter of a certain cheapening of style—which has afflicted many seminal musicians who began with a sense of individuality, later began to pursue change, development, progress, to chase after being "with it," *en vogue,* and ended with an amalgam of styles bordering on cheap eclecticism.

Mr. Charles still maintains his own brand of melodiousness which predicates the seductive features of his delivery. But he has lost his yellow basket of simplicity, directness, trenchantness of a musical trademark, and now when he sings "Georgia on My Mind"—his hymn—the convolutedness of his interpretation buries all emotion in vocal *fioritura* and arpeggios, and nothing hovers over the audience but the memory of simpler, better times. One yearns to hear his unforgettable "Hit the Road, Jack," and instead one floats on the foam of mechanical ballads in which Mr. Charles's magic flexibility of voice impresses but no longer enraptures. He has a band which is technically impeccable, arrangements which are imposing in their professionalism, but neither the musicians nor the orchestrations demonstrate anything but slick showmanship and the smug clichés of post-Kentonian swing.

Freshness is a strange component of art, talent, genius, creativity. In jazz Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Lio-



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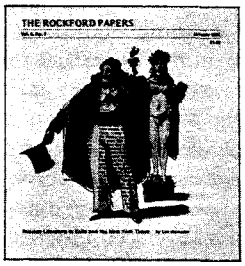
"I always benefit from reading *The Rockford Papers* which seem to me to include some of the best conservative writings of recent times"

—Peregrine Worsthorne
Associate Editor, *Sunday Telegraph*



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nel Hampton always played *their* music and stubbornly refused to refresh it or amend it according to the demands of newness, progress, trendiness. For generations, their music preserved that eternal freshness which is beyond innovations, trends, new horizons—and it still does, even on the oldest and mustiest records. □

A Piano Duo

Ralph Sutton & Jay McShann: *The Last of the Whorehouse Piano Players;* Chaz Jazz Records; North Hampton, New Hampshire.

To entitle this two-volume album by two technically accomplished pianists—who evoke the times and moods of jazz which have become perfectly respectable over decades of the American musical tradition—whorehouse piano playing is either gauche, or coy, or obscure. Sutton and McShann represent a kind of Midwestern pattern, which came to its peak under the Kansas City-style label. There are plenty of mild mannerisms and eclecticism in their approach to the tonal fabric and melodic lore with which both men obviously have spent their lives. They both seem to love warmly what they committed themselves to and what for them is art. The records can be obtained only through mail order and should be requested from Chaz Jazz Records, Box 565, North Hampton, New Hampshire 03862. □

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

Israel or the Quandaries of Commitment

by Leopold Tyrmand

"All I know is what I see in the papers" —Will Rogers used to repeat wistfully. In our time we must revise that gloomy condition: these days, all we are supposed to know is what we see in the liberal papers. Most of what we see there is, at best, puzzling. For example: Why, during the last two years, have the liberal papers become rabidly anti-Israel? *Time* magazine and the *Chicago Tribune* lead the way.

The hypocrisy, equivocation and casuistry with which the "responsible" organs approach the issue borders on the bizarre. On one of *Newsweek's* recent covers one could see a picture which would have made Julius Streicher snuggle comfortably in his grave. It featured a Star of David composed of assault rifles, and an inset of Mr. Begin's face exactly as it would have been presented on the front page of *Der Stürmer* in an attempt to pictorialize the Jew, the eternal wrecker of the world. The cover story is entitled "Roadblock to Peace?", and it repeats the familiar charge: that Mr. Begin's premiership is the gravest, perhaps the only, reason that this planet cannot achieve a state of idyllic tranquility. Why Mr. Begin's nationalism—firmly grounded in a democratic, arch-Western principle of representing the will of the people through a mechanism of undisputably free elections—is a despicable right-wing phenomenon in American liberal eyes, while the vicious nationalism of Hanoi, the Sandinistas, the late President Torrijos or Mr. Mugabe is kosher is a question one can never cease to ask.

The code word of all that liberal anti-Israel maneuvering is America's national interest. It seems appropriate to mention that neither *The Nation* nor the World Council of Churches has been, for the last century or so, too passionately devoted to American interest: at the hub of their concern was humanity's interest—the interest of the undernourished masses in Asia, the starving infants in Africa or along the Amazon and, more recently, the interest of anti-American guerrilla movements all around the world. But suddenly—when it pontificates about Israel—the entire American liberal left adopts the stance of a hard-boiled corporate imperialist egomaniac whose only passionate commitment is to the immediate American interest and any cullable profits.

One thus is inclined to ask a question: In light of the current geopolitical situation and with special regard to the Middle East—what is America's interest and how best can it be served?

Let's avoid military-strategic intelligence-gathering speculations, on which not everybody is able properly to elaborate. However, reaching into pure political logic (which is available to anyone who wishes to be morally decent about public matters), one would like to stress that the primary allegiance of our foreign policy should be to an ideological ally. Common civilizational and ideological heritage is the only rudiment of meaningful and functional alliances. England and France discovered through the *Entente Cordiale* that submitting politico-commercial cutthroat antagonisms to the requirements of an alliance based on a common *Weltanschauung* makes nations best fit to overcome their shared dangers. America, the staunchest supporter of moral substance in foreign-policy matters, should know by now that it was always victorious when its wars were an imperative to help those with whom the bonds of a common principle existed. Over the last two decades we have forfeited two allegiances, betrayed two allies and come quite close, under Carter, to a third failure of word, will and political decency. Anyone who claims that such an approach to world affairs means *Realpolitik* is suffering from political myopia. To abandon Israel would make us a laughingstock in all those chancellories around the world where, these days, the local *Realpolitikers* are advising us to do just that.

Mr. Tyrmand is editor of the Chronicles of Culture.

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It is certainly in America's paramount interest to develop an internal consensus on foreign policy. All those Middle East experts who write endless "evenhanded" diatribes — which inevitably end up condemning Israel and reminding the public that we need Arab oil—smugly dismiss the fact that there has been a near-unanimous support for Israel in this country for more than 30 years. When they intimate that that support was the effect of some sinister Jewish-Zionist machinations, they grossly distort reality. The pro-Zionist stance is deeply embedded in the Protestant churches. Reverend Falwell and the fundamentalists are flamboyant admirers of the Israelis' Biblically rooted, nationalistic traditionalism; a vast number of Americans who read papers during those three decades are strongly persuaded that, both morally and historically, justice and right lies on the Israeli side of the conflict. Our current President and his ideological entourage seem to belong to this segment. Finally, a great many thinking people question what we would gain from the Arab world in exchange for dumping the Israeli alliance. More oil at a better price? Some strategic mutual-defense pact? Or perhaps a new ideological alliance?

The answer to the last question is, of course, most confusing, even unsavory, on closer examination. After all, even liberal America is the product of the Judeo-Christian civilization, and anyone with propaedeutic knowledge of history and religious world views must be distrustful of Islamic philosophical tenets. The events of our time have done nothing to dissipate these forebodings. The fanaticism, despotism and social savagery with which Moslem societies regulate their own affairs, the appallingly genuine susceptibility of Islamic mass-movements to Marxism, its dialectics and political morality and, ultimately, Islam's passionate hatred of Western Christianity for nearly 1000 years—tempered only lately by commercial and technological considerations—all that does not sit comfortably with the idea of a viable, or even reasonable, alliance. There is no evidence that the Moslem world as an ideological entity, with the exception of some perennially endangered monarchs, prefers our world to that of the Soviets. There's no evidence that, once Israel ceases to exist, the Islamic societies would continue to pledge their loyalty to us, rather than to the Soviets, or even that they wouldn't try to destroy us in the name of centuries-long feelings of unsatisfied revenge. In these terms, Israel becomes an important factor of cool political maneuvering:

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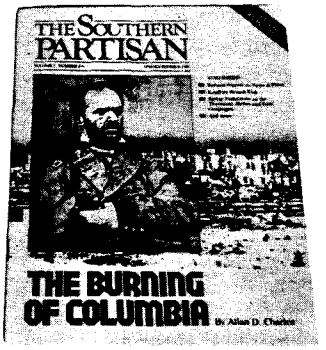

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as long as it exists, it's a powerful emotional buffer between Islam and what the Moslem ideologies might like to do to the West, and the United States in particular. As long as we have leverage—Israel—the Arabs must ask favors of us instead of musing about what they can inflict upon us. The truth is that as long as Israel refuses to submit to Arab demands and is capable of repelling any attempted annihilation, a gallon of gas will not cost more than $1.30 or so; once the Saudis get their way with the Palestinian question, we may be in for a surprise so far as that price is concerned.

The naive viciousness with which the American liberal left attacks Israel is repulsive but understandable: Israel's rational resistance to the subversion of Western sociomoral ideals provokes the primitive ire of *Mother Jones, Village Voice* and Trotskyites alike. Why middle-of-the-road liberalism in America has turned against Israel is more enigmatic, sinister and, perhaps, even more reprehensible. One does not know why Time-Life, Inc., with all its immense propagandistic and financial resources, assails Israel with a ferocity that drags their reporting and commenting down to the level of nazi or communist argumentation. *Time's* routine explanation is that its primary concern is America's national welfare.* This kind of zealous selflessness reminds us that we know nothing about Time-Life's possible investments in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, and even less about how ardently and sincerely its corporate chieftains believe that what's good for Time-Life, Inc. is good for America. All I know is what I read in print, and I read *Time's* recent essay, "What To Do About Israel." In it a certain Strobe Talbott performs the most remarkable hatchet job to date: not a single Israeli viewpoint is presented while the most fantastic and vicious arguments of Israel's foes are lovingly and reverently illuminated. The general tone is that of an appeal for an anti-Israeli pogrom. One distinctly feels that Mr. Talbott need not worry about his future: any totalitarian propaganda office in Amman, Riyadh, Baghdad, Tripoli or Damascus will be more than willing to take care of him from now on; indeed, any fascist or communist center of opinion would be proud to have him as a chief polemicist. One of Mr. Talbott's finely crafted thoughts evoked a particular feeling of melancholy—he describes Israel as "a hospitable if sometimes overheated environment for the thriving of Western values." Which Western values? Those conceived in front of the burning bush and Gethsemane or those fabricated in the liberal corporate chambers? Mr. Talbott somehow seems to say that that strip of land—where Moses and Jesus taught, where the Western notions of moral law, one Deity, human conscience and sense of personal responsibility were formulated—is not exactly a cradle of Western spiritual strength but merely a recipient of it, like a Coca Cola importer. He seems to suggest that the real and only source of every wisdom, good and honor that may be found in those values is in the building on the corner of Sixth Avenue and 51st Street which houses Time-Life, Inc. At this juncture of history, the supreme American interest is to restore its image as a trustworthy ally which is able to sustain an ideologically motivated commitment regardless of shifting economic-political priorities. That image is today in a shambles. It was nearly shattered during the 60's and 70's when American foreign policy was made by mobs in the streets and manipulated by primitive sentiments, leftist cunning and unpunishable traitors. The anti-Israeli policy predicated by the corporate-liberal sense of history and national grandeur—if it is actually adopted by our government—could transmute our international image from an ineffectual one to a pitiful one.

*On the other hand, *National Review* cannot be accused of dishonesty, only of giddy squishiness. The organ of Blackford Oakes is somehow unable to apply that man's finely tuned knowledge of women's passions and responses to politics. After the Reagan-Begin meeting, in which it was apparent that they had struck some kind of deal about the AWAC's, *NR* still accused the Israelis of manipulation. It just does not occur to *NR's* subtle analysts that a lot of Republican and conservative senators still cannot grasp why we refused to share the AWAC's intricacies with Englishmen (who had an industrial revolution) or with the Germans (who developed the quantum theory of physics) but are eager to share it with the Saudis, who—their intellectual capacities aside—like a lot of people who intensely dislike us.

Addendum

The assassination of President Sadat and the odd indifference shown by the Egyptian people to the death of an allegedly beloved leader tell more about today's world of Islam than does the shallow reporting of the news magazines or the opinionated editorials based on these reports. It's now more obvious than ever that pan-Arabic and pan-Moslem fanaticism rules the collective subconsciousness of ca 250,000,000 people from Malaysia to Morocco. Those emotions are essentially anti-Christian, anti-Western and anti-American in nature. They will erupt at the most unexpected occasions and manifest

In the Mail

"Low Intensity Conflict and the Integrity of the Soviet Bloc"; Centre for Conflict Studies, University of New Brunswick; Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. A report on a workshop conducted in March 1981.

"Conflict Quarterly" (Summer 1981); Centre for Conflict Studies, University of Brunswick; Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. A collection of essays considering various international conflicts.

***Target America* by James L. Tyson; Regnery/Gateway; South Bend, Indiana.** An inquiry into the nature and extent of communist influence on the American media.

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themselves in the least anticipated places. To structure "alliances" and "friendships" upon a grossly misperceived political "reality" amounts to building castles from the finest desert sand. □

JOURNALISM

Liberal Fundamentalism

Time recently ran a cover story on Senator Jesse Helms, and on the cover one could see a drawing of Mr. Helms's face which had been doctored to look like a combination of Frankenstein, Dr. Strangelove, the meanest of Babbitts and, somehow, oddly like *Time's* own editor, Mr. Henry A. Grunwald (whose own countenance, for murky reasons, is rarely shown in *Time's* pages). In the story itself we could find the following archtenet of liberal fundamentalism hiding beneath the routine, plastic, made-in-Rockefeller Center journalese:

> Somewhere along the way there must have been normal childhood terrors and chills. But in Helms' memory, any trauma is lost in the harmonious glow of old - time, small - town pleasures.

In other words, in keeping with *Time's* liberal gospel, a happy childhood without "terrors" and "chills" is impossible, especially in America. Had Senator Helms desired his sister, decapitated his father or been raped by a male teacher, his childhood would have been "normal," according to *Time's* taste and vision of world and life. That he did not is unforgivable by the paladins of childhood unhappiness through sexual education, prurience for tots, psychoanalysis for everybody.

This alone would be enough to confirm Senator Helms's conservative villainy, but *Time* magazine's moralists —who, in the text, lavishly toss such descriptions of the Senator and his work as "reactionary," "packed with . . . meanspiritedness," expressing "recurring paranoia"—have still another grave verdict to pass. In 1962 Mr. Helms, already the father of two children, adopted a nine-year-old orphan who suffered from cerebral palsy. The boy is now a 27-year-old forestry student, thanks to the generous medical care (four operations) offered to him by Mr. Helms and his family. But in *Time's* opinion "the son does not entirely erase the sins of the father." With liberal rabidity the liberal fundamentalists from the Time & Life Building quote a "Helms watcher" in North Carolina who said:

> 'Jesse adopted a handicapped son. . . . It cost him a lot of doctor's bills. He'd give the coat off his back to help someone lying in the street, but he's not going to vote for food stamps.'

This sums it all up. Liberal fundamentalism cannot conceive of worse wickedness than not to vote for food stamps. We feel, however, that an overwhelming majority of the American people—despite all the brainwashing from *Time, 60 Minutes* and other stalwarts of the compassion industry—will still find it difficult to condemn someone who shares his life with a sick orphaned child, but refuses to share his conscience with programs spawned by misguided humanitarianism in the services of an arrogant liberal bureaucracy. □

Sexual Revolution

The *Chicago Tribune* has lately been devoting a considerable amount of its precious newsprint, space and effort to what it labels as information about what it calls the sexual revolution. We could certainly agree that additional information about abortion and VD (now called "sexually transmitted diseases," which removes the last remnant of grim romanticism once associated with the adjective "venereal," no mean comfort to people like Henry VIII, Mussolini and Schopenhauer) makes some social sense. We also think, however, that this benefit is mostly canceled by the mere fact that sexual matters—once the domain of philosophers, moralists, poets, novelists and scientists—have become, in our day, a paltry playground for journalists, who have a peculiar penchant for vulgar flatness in viewing the affairs of this world. Every journalistic foray into the realm of human sensuality—be it in *Psychology Today, National Enquirer, Saturday Review* or *New York Post*—contributes to the overall ambience of hackneyism and trivialization which, as more and more people are noticing, has turned into a contemporary social and existential plague. The gentleman who wrote the series for the *Chicago Tribune,* a certain Mr. Kotulak, is identified in his credit line as a "science editor"; his introspection, methodology and style of writing strike us rather as perfectly suitable for reporting on home insulation or purse snatching, on which he could successfully elaborate with the same force of reasoning and erudition.

In the beginning of his series, Mr. Kotulak invokes Freud, Kinsey and the Masters & Johnson duo as the spiritual fathers of what he defines as the contemporary "sexual revolution." He is totally oblivious of the notion that what we nowadays know about, and do with, our sexuality is just an uncontrolled-by-any-criteria—cognitive, moral or social—quantification of what bright people, after coming of age, have known since mankind's dawn in every civilization and what not-so-bright people, regardless of age, have never known and never will. This kind of brightness has nothing to do with formal instruction or education, and it is doubtful whether

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science will ever probe its fathomless depths and diversity. Of course Mr. Kotulak brutalizes the role and significance of his own heroes as he drills at the enigmas of humanness with his journalistic pneumatic hammer. He falsifies the teachings of Freud, who intensely and explicitly warned about the uncertainty of his own psychoanalytical findings, forcefully insisting that any approach to human sexuality must begin with a strict sociomoral code and that any mass-marketing of sexual recipes boded ill for humanity. Professor Kinsey was a statistician who had powerful doubts about his own method; he was quite wary about translating his data into a system of socioethical remedies. Masters & Johnson's allegedly scientific act triggered a lot of criticism among philosophers and medical doctors alike. Their pretension to therapeutic findings must cause revulsion in every responsible cultural historian who still remembers what for millennia was called whoredom and what, in our time, Masters & Johnson have labeled scientific research, attributing a healing potential to it. Mr. Kotulak heartily endorses Masters & Johnson's "discoveries," and he sees no ancient custom or wisdom whatsoever in his own conclusion that, thanks to those venerable doctors, "Masturbation is now commonly used by therapists to induce orgasms in impotent men and women who have problems achieving orgasm." After all, these "therapists" perform their "therapy" for a fee, don't they?

Perhaps the most inane aspect of Mr. Kotulak's chores is his attempt to deal with problems like sex education and teen-age pregnancy. He reverently quotes a certain Dr. Domena Renshaw, director of Loyola University's Sexual Dysfunction Clinic, who fiercely defends sexual education. "I believe that . . . ignorance has led to sexual performance and experimentation," Ms. Renshaw affirms, and she resolutely asserts that we have far too little of that education, on a too-timid scale, if we want to create a society which is healthy, well-informed and worry-free with respect to sexually induced social anomalies. At the same time Ms. Renshaw is unable to explain why we have about one million teen-age pregnancies per year—a monstrous phenomenon which threatens the very fabric of our existence as a nation—after at least two decades of sex education at the high-school level where every aspect of sexual practice has been inculcated into youthful minds. Nor can she confront the question of why, prior to sex education (when sociomoral codes of behavior were enforced by the family, school and church and teen-age sexual comportment was a part of a system of emotional penalties and rewards), the society had its share of early pregnancies, often called misconduct or even tragedies, but never such a massive social problem of premature, unwanted pregnancies. To be sure, Mr. Kotulak does not press Ms. Renshaw too hard: as a trendy "science editor," he seems uninterested in more complex reasoning. Which is much like his powerful press organ, whose liberal conscience never allows an honest response to plaintive letters from readers who ask why in a poor, Depression-era Chicago the ethnic neighborhoods and parks were safe to sleep in, while in an affluent Chicago of the 70's and 80's people do not dare to venture into a park after 6 p.m.

Perhaps the most telling example of the damage inflicted upon both culture and human existential perspectives by journalism's boorish juggling of the sexuality theme is stated by Mr. Kotulak himself:

> Sex is becoming recognized as a vital function, as important to the body as eating, sleeping and elimination.

One hopes that the time is coming when American journalists who dabble in the lucrative subject of human sexuality, vulgarizing it beyond repair, will be made accountable for their heinous inversion of the very notion of importance and for the degeneration of the word. □

Awakening?

It would be too optimistic to predict, but something is brewing at the *Village Voice,* until now little more than an advertising organ for mattresses, stereos and the mental stupor that goes with transmogrifying these objects into ideological semiotics. In its September 16 issue it featured a Mr. Stanley Crouch, who excoriates liberals for pitying the black criminals behind bars and for clamoring for forbearance of sordid uprisings in the name of making prisons more comfortable for savage murderers and other beastly social predators. Mr. Crouch is black, which makes him instantly credible. Then we encounter an article by a certain Mr. Walter Kendrick, who convincingly argues that since the time of Freud (who was more of a philosophizing, artful storyteller than a scientist) the psychoanalytical industry, posing as science, has inflicted perhaps irreparable damage to our civilization by creating an irresponsible, shallow subculture of paltry feelings and behavior.

Finally, in the same issue, Mr. Peter Schjeldahl comes forth with a review of a study entitled *Father-Daughter Incest,* written by Ms. Judith Lewis Herman from the Women's Mental Health Collective in Somerville, Massachusetts, and published recently by Harvard University Press. There can be no doubt that Mr. Schjeldahl is unequivocally against

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the cultural trends that encourage or advocate the overthrowing of what many liberal propagandists call the "incest taboo." His is a passionate and devastating diatribe against incest as a moral and behavioral transgression, whatever its explanation. Moreover, short of using the word "sin" (which would probably make the editors of *VV* throw up and its printers faint), Mr. Schjeldahl elaborates on the notion of evil. Here is what he has to say:

> Evil is the topic for today. Not, for the moment, the evil of social and economic injustice, not political evils that, in their abstractness, galvanize and reassure the spirit of reform. No. The topic is evil with a human face, singular and intimate, irreversible evil —what one person does to another and what happens next. No wonder horror movies are popular. They conform to our current social experience so closely.... pure corn-fed American liberal insensibility—looking straight at evil and seeing an unhealthy effect of puritanical education . . . I share and try to live Herman's social ideal —a democratic family in which authority and child-care are evenly shared—but I'm skeptical of her ideological optimism, that old-time liberal optimism that sees evil as a conditioned response.

It's superb that in a fanatically radical-chic journal a writer with an obvious liberal allegiance is able to mention evil as something autonomous and psychomoral, as if he were quoting from our own pages. Yet Mr. Schjeldahl is unable to make the necessary cognitive and logical connection between what he calls evil and the liberal hegemony in American culture. The new wave of horror movies does not *mirror* our experience, it *creates* it. There is a monster out there, fed by the faulty liberal archtenet that every ethical norm has been, until recently, a token of repression and *now* should, or must, be abolished in the name of human inquiry and self-realization unfettered by reason, knowledge or empirical evidence. Having overthrown all other "repressive" conventions of human sexuality, the liberal culture is now after incest as "the last taboo." Not stopping before any abomination is the liberal culture's honor and idealism. Not to fight it might mean boredom for the theoreticians of pedophilia. Not long ago a feminist book was published entitled *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies,* but neither the author nor the critics ever made the cognitive linkage which obviously indicates that the acceptance of rape as an inseparable coefficient of our culture may be the result of the liberal scholasticism in viewing the First Amendment. Consequently, books are written and movies are made which portray incest as the forbidden ultimate in humanness. The public, particularly youthful consumers of the radical-cultural tawdriness, is vulnerable. The "respectable" publishing houses sniff money, feature the *Show Me!*-type stuff to libraries and a certain Ms. Virginia Andrews makes millions for Gulf & Western, Inc.'s Pocket Book division by writing books which turn the incest theme into schmaltz and kitsch. She sells them to teen-agers who devour her tear-jerkers about copulating siblings and, in due course, embark on existentially damaging imitations. An aura is created. Incestuous trendiness does not "come out of the closet." It is cynically promoted and it infests the society.

This is how we see evil at work. Nothing metaphysical, just the mechanism of the liberal culture cranked up on Madison Avenue. □

THE AMERICAN PROSCENIUM

Perversion

With a sort of bemused smile we read in the newspapers and watched on TV West German crowds protesting Secretary Haig's presence and affirmation of the U.S. resolve to defend Europe against communism. During these gatherings the American flag was used to fashion a pig as a symbol of American repulsiveness, and a mob inebriated with idiotic fanaticism once again hurled at us insults, among which killing babies in Vietnam was perhaps the mildest. All this happened just a few decades after we rescued Europe from nazi barbarity and Western Europe from Stalin's lethal schemes by generously helping it to recover from its own disasters, by making it robust on our — literally speaking — nourishment and wealthy behind the shield of our arms.

We have good reasons to surmise that West Germany is not the only breeding ground of badly vitiated minds and fertile soil for simplistic Soviet propaganda; the same mood prevails in other parts of Europe. Scorn, malice and reprehension is what Europe returns for all we have done for her. Europeans envy us our zest for life, our blue jeans and our popular music: this jealousy forms a sort of inferiority complex in the collective European consciousness and leads to a kinky hatred. The Russians threaten to exterminate the Poles for the latters' mere mention that they do not feel free, and West Europeans seem to find such a response quite legitimate. However, to West Europeans, freedom is nothing less than the license to drag us through mud and abomination, while all *we* are permitted to say is that the European abusiveness is actually a mature disagreement, or old and wise diplomacy. A not-too-subtle conservative columnist in Washington, D.C. called the German detractors of Haig and Old Glory "perverts," and though the expression seems to us a bit pithy, we cannot deny that there are times when such epithets have a certain validity, even accuracy. Signs of perversion

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—that is, sickness—could be detected on the faces of the Teutonic juvenile delinquents we saw on our TV screens.

What can we do about all that?

Not much, for the moment, beyond some hard, uncompromising thinking from which some new, fresh and bold conceptualizations may emerge. Suppose we begin with disposing of that shabby New York burlesque show that is housed on the corner of First Avenue and 42nd Street, on the East River. We might then announce that we are willing to maintain business and trade relations with everybody on earth, but that we will form alliances only with nations which sincerely appreciate us for who we are, for what we do and for what we stand. We could declare that we expect loyalty not just from other nations' calculating and prevaricative elites but from the people who answer opinion polls and who stage street demonstrations. We understand and value dissent, but we will not tolerate corrupt ingratitude, gratuitous meanness and the insolent exploitation of our good democratic manners.

Secondly, we could dispense with the deeply entrenched lobby of our own foreign-policy shamans who, for three generations, have been advising us to give money to those who dislike, even loathe, us in order to make them like and respect us. We have poured billions of dollars into this shady enterprise that was doomed from the beginning. Those who seek good feelings through gold are, in fact, proponents of harlotry in foreign affairs—and any global policy built on such a scheme inevitably turns *Realpolitik* into parody. We thus suggest the immediate, drastic curtailment of foreign subsidies, aid, donation, support and programs and the investment, instead, of this money into domestic welfare. Immense funds will thereby be freed for defense or for reducing the national deficit. Once we mount a giant rearmament effort spurious friends will mushroom—that kind of friend is always more impressed by strength than by good will. "Fortress America" is a concept despised by our own liberals, but even if we were to isolate ourselves politically from the rest of the world and begin to develop an autarchic policy, the rest of the world would still be knocking at our door—attracted to our institutions, our vivacity, our cultural potential.

Finally, we must shed our traditional sentimentality for Europe. During this century our civilizational communion with Europe was pretty much a one-way street: we paid homage and reverence, searched for our roots, admitted our everlasting philosophical debt. The more we stressed commonality the more Europe accused us of neocolonialism and spit on our multinationals—which had helped to cure their unemployment. What's worse, the generation of Western Europeans which owes us its political and physical survival claims that our only contributions to Western civilization are Coca Cola and musicals, whereas civilization's other canons we must accept from them. However, it seems to us that if the main substances of Western civilization are freedom of inquiry into the human condition, moral idealism, the ethos of individual integrity and the search for transcendental truth and justice, there's as much if not more Western civilization in a New England town meeting, an Illinois Chamber of Commerce, a Montana national park preserve and a Virginia law school than there is in the Louvre, Cambridge University, La Scala or the Nobel Prize jury. A recurrent American nightmare is that, in the event of World War Three, we may be forced to sacrifice Chartres and Venice in order to stave off the Russian hordes—and this would mean the end of Western civilization. We propose that America sleep peacefully. After Berlin's anti-Haig demonstration we must realize that Western civilization is alive and well in such places as an Idaho high school and a Texas art council; there is little need to bleed for Heidelberg or the French theater of the absurd. Not long ago Mr. Tony Wedgwood Benn, the leader of the British Labour Party and the proud, certified, most distinguished West European America-hater, said at a political meeting that "the liberties enjoyed today in Britain were bought with Russian blood . . ." So why should America bother once again to offer its own blood when this time Western Europe is looking for a better deal? Or, rather, a bargain.

Chastity Games

The lights are on, the gong has rung and the first round is under way. In one corner of the ring we have the forces of chastity which are out to save the moral fiber of the nation; in the opposite corner are all the powers that see permissive toleration as the main vehicle to human self-realization and social progress. The U.S. Congress has passed something unofficially labeled "the teen-age chastity bill," and the Senate is expected to deliberate an amendment to the Public Health Service Act. It was proposed by Senator Jeremiah Denton from Alabama and is aimed at "discouraging sexual relations among unmarried young people" and "promoting self-discipline." Both efforts are opposed by everybody in the vast territory of the sexual-information industry — from Planned Parenthood and the Sex Education Council to liberal columnists to the *Penthouse* and *Hustler* moral philosophers to the publishers of manuals like *How to Lay a Man* (a current best-seller on the *New York Times* list) to a polyglot amalgam of psychoanalysts, therapists, Plato's Retreat, etc.

We think that Senator Denton is fighting for a good cause with insufficient weapons. The so-called sexual revolution is not a matter of morals but mores which have been inspired by cultural climates originating in liberal ideological nihilism. We do not believe that mores and sociocultural ambiences can be legislated: in order to change them, they must be influenced and

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transformed by opposing cultural factors. We wish Senator Denton success, but we do not believe he can achieve it.

However, we emphatically disagree with and repudiate his opponents. To our mind, the plague of teen-age pregnancies must be blamed on sex educators, planners of parenthood, various sexologists and therapists, all the heinous exploiters, from Hefner to Hite. Sex education results in making sexuality pedestrian, flat, a run-of-the-mill occurrence and, consequently, an object of such quotidian commonplace that any attempt to endow it with an ethical perspective must end in open ridicule from the youth who have been exposed to a classroom treatment of one of life's most convoluted mysteries. Removing the gist of exceptionality, ritual, etiquette and celebration from things sexual inevitably ends in their abject trivialization, both in movies and in practical existence. Knowledge is not necessarily the key to *any* value of existence: often a system of legends can make life saner and richer, which obviously applies to our interrelationship with our own carnality. Finally, any normative morality is built on the balance between permission and prohibition, and sex education threatens this balance by eliminating all normative qualifications for sex acts on the pretext of looking for "remedies through information."

One reaction to Senator Denton's initiative came from a member of Chicago's Planned Parenthood, who exclaimed in an interview: "This is an antisex and antiwoman movement." What utter nonsense. The supreme argument of the sex educators for the last half-century was that all social ills related to sexuality stemmed from the ignorance of youth who had no knowledge of contraceptives or how to prevent venereal disease. For more than twenty years now, they have saturated American classrooms with charts and films showing every aspect of copulation; they virtually rule Hollywood, television and the New York publishing industry; they have even demonstrated how to use a condom on network news. But the problems get worse and worse every year—14-year-old girls give birth to retarded or defective babies, sexuality (once Shakespeare's "jewel of this world") becomes a banality, and the existences of people who, at 18, have seen and experienced everything becomes emptier and more meaningless with every new movie and new issue of *Psychology Today*. To all that hard evidence Planned Parenthood bigots reply that there is still not enough information, and some of their brethren in New York City suggest we carry sex education to the cradle by making babies aware of their sex organs as early as possible. To us this looks like fanatic idiocy, and whoever is trying to break the spell of madness which has hovered over America for the last 20 years has our support. Therefore, although we believe Senator Denton may be a fighter somewhat ill-prepared for his bout, we will stand in his corner.

The First of May in September

The AFL-CIO staged a mass rally in Washington, D.C. to protest President Reagan's policies, to prove that the rank and file stands firmly behind the labor establishment and to express its boundless dismay at Mr. Reagan's very existence. To achieve a respectable turnout, the unionist elite had to call on the entire freak left, thus associating itself, for the first time in labor's history, with lesbians, Trotskyites and radical chic. The most outrageous, or amusing, aspect of the event was its packaging and labeling as "Solidarity Day"—an all-too-callous attempt to identify itself with the workers' movement in Poland. For the sake of fairness, two points of difference must be brought up. First, the Polish Solidarity is directed against a totalitarian evil which is embodied in a political power that denies the Poles every freedom: social, individual, political, economic. American labor has all possible freedom and an avid itch to do away with economic freedom in America. Second, Lech Walesa and his asso-

Criticism in America

A *Chicago Tribune* "critic" reports on a new novel by the latest glory of French literature by quoting an unnamed source's opinion of Monsieur Michael Tournier's (the author's) "allegorical fiction 'The Ogre' ":

> [it] has been called 'the most important book to come out in France since Proust.'

This is a neat way to kill: with a single stroke, Giraudoux, Duhamel, Cocteau, Romain Rolland, Bernanos, Malraux, Celine, Mauriac, Colette and Camus have been eradicated from French literature. But the *Trib* "critic," with the breed's usual tidiness and precision, uses the noun "book," rather than "novel," which makes us wonder about the importance of Claudel's, Bergson's, de Montherlant's, Sartre's and Julian Benda's contributions. By the way: we suspect that the *Trib's* guru found his swashbuckling conclusion in the publisher's blurb about the reviewed novel. If we're right, it would mean that everything we always thought about the *Chicago Tribune's* school of literary criticism, its refinement and importance, was painfully correct. □

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ciates live, for the most part, in two-room apartments with families of six, and their monthly remuneration scarcely exceeds the wage of an unskilled worker in America. Mr. Lane Kirkland's, his lieutenants' and other union chieftains' honoraria are in the six-figure brackets, no less than high-paid corporate executives. Can this be called working people's solidarity? Douglas Fraser, president of the United Auto Workers, said in his thunderously received speech to the rally that President Reagan's economic policies are leading to "a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich." Isn't that a puzzling statement, considering Mr. Fraser's own salary? Is he going to refuse tax cuts in his next report to the Internal Revenue Service?

The Emperor's Wardrobe

> The word 'civilization' to my mind is coupled with death. When I use the word, I see civilization as a crippling, thwarting thing, a stultifying thing. For me it was always so.
>
> —Henry Miller

Without realizing his own perspicuity, the grand old fornicator of American letters set forth the "philosophy" that guides America's reigning literary establishment. "Up with art and down with civilization" chant the literati who have boosted to fame such writers as Norman Mailer, Edgar Doctorow and William Styron. In a replay of a now-familiar cultural ritual, America's claimants to literary immortality have grown fat and rich while indulging themselves in *nostalgie de la boue* and disdain for the bourgeoisie.

Harper's, which in the late 1960's and early 1970's did as much as any cultural journal to promote the philistinism of the literary taste-makers, has finally cried "Enough!" In a two-part essay appearing in the August and September issues of the magazine, a Mr. Bryan F. Griffin has blurted out the dolorous news: the emperor is naked.

Mr. Griffin gleefully pillories the icons of the establishment. With finely honed invective and an eye for the damning quotation, he ridicules our contemporary literary greats for their "onanistic view of human existence and culture." Terms such as "eccentric mediocrity" and "suspended cultural adolescence" fly from Griffin's pen. Clearly this gentleman has undertaken a task no less daunting—and necessary—than Hercules' cleansing of the Augean stables. Anyone who suspects that our current brood of novelists and poets falls shy of the standards set by a Homer, a Virgil, a Cervantes or a Tolstoi will find it difficult to resist Mr. Griffin's exuberant iconoclasm.

A few *caveats* do seem in order. In laying waste the books and journals that have contributed to the current debacle, Griffin strangely ventures nary a word about the role that *Harper's,* under the editorship of Willie Morris, played in leading us into the quagmire. Griffin omits writers who would suit his purposes perfectly, namely Kurt Vonnegut and Richard Brautigan. Even more curious, in singling out the handful of writers for whom art means something more than the transformation of masturbatory lucubrations into best sellers, Griffin says nothing of Saul Bellow, Eudora Welty or Walker Percy. And to lump Philip Roth (the Roth of *Goodbye, Columbus,* not of *The Breast*) with the likes of Doctorow and Joyce Carol Oates strikes us as perverse.

Griffin's greatest shortcoming lies elsewhere, though. Beyond an appeal to Ruskin's call for an art that illuminates "the personality, activity, and living perceptions of a good and great human soul," Griffin offers few alternatives. Yes, he calls for the upholding of high standards of artistic endeavor, and, yes, he pays his respects to "grandeur of vision." But we search in vain for something more, for some foundation, some deep and abiding principle, as a basis for Mr. Griffin's animadversions. Mr. Griffin excels in the negative, but he offers little by way of the positive.

Witch Hunt at Yale

In an address to the new freshman class (high-pitched for the liberal media and eminently suitable for copious reprinting), Mr. A. Bartlett Giamatti, Yale University president, accused the Moral Majority, "and its satellite or client groups," of many nasty if not outright vicious and shocking things. Reading his emotionally charged statement, we got an impression that Mr. Giamatti was referring not to what the Moral Majority spokesmen actually say, want or proclaim, but to what Mr. Giamatti *says* they are saying, wanting or proclaiming. This, of course, was the essence of McCarthyism, and the Yale president's choice of epithets and tone sadly reminded us that whether such words and sounds are used on the right or left of our ideological spectrum, it is still McCarthyism, which is a very, very bad thing. It remains to be seen, too, whom the Moral Majority has "intimidated," where it has stifled "diversity" and how it has swept away "anyone who holds a different opinion" and on and on. Certainly, neither New York's 42nd Street, nor Hollywood, nor the mores and tastes on Yale's New Haven campus bear any scars from injuries inflicted by those whom Mr. Giamatti calls the "peddlers of coercion." Mr. Giamatti stated emphatically:

> The point is, the rest of us hold to ideas of family, country, belief in God, in different ways. The right to differ, and to see things differently, is our concern.

It always seemed to us that the concern to see things differently from Mr. Giamatti's venerable institution in New Haven is what the Moral Majority is all about. For the last two decades the all-powerful media have given us ample opportunity to hear about Mr. Giamatti's and his allies' ideas on family, country and God. It has been blasted all over the country, through education, entertainment, TV news, etc., by virtue of the authoritarian monopoly of the lib-

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The Dartmouth Review

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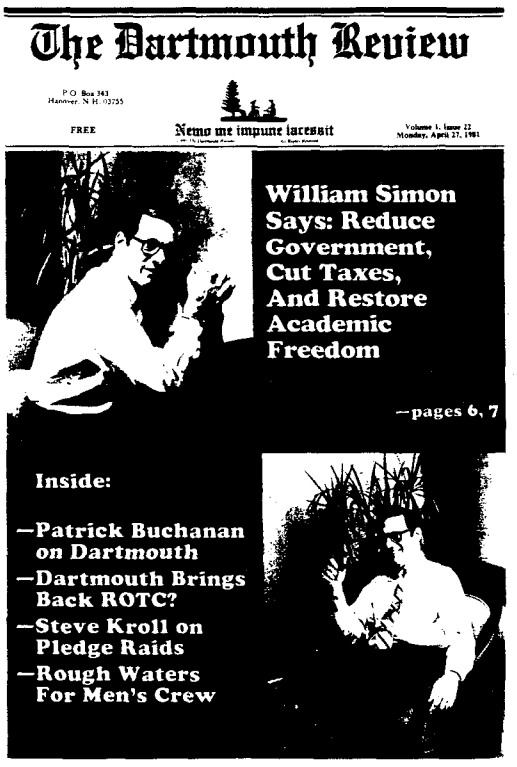
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Volume 1, Issue 22
Monday, April 27, 1981

William Simon Says: Reduce Government, Cut Taxes, And Restore Academic Freedom

—pages 6, 7

Inside:

—Patrick Buchanan on Dartmouth
—Dartmouth Brings Back ROTC?
—Steve Kroll on Pledge Raids
—Rough Waters For Men's Crew

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eral establishment. We've never heard a Moral Majority preacher exhorting an audience to march on Yale and influence its curricula, nor has one even asked that august university about its generous hospitality to Marxist ideas and preachers.

Reagan and the Financiers or Susanna and the Elders

Wall Street chafed under Jimmy Carter, longing for the day when a conservative would sit in the White House. Wall Street's prayers have been answered, but something has gone awry: the financial community has responded to President Reagan's fiscal policies with something less than enthusiasm. In essence, it's the same situation as in that famed Biblical parable. Wall Street's not-too-clean old men are trying to probe Reagan's fiscal chastity. The overall outcome, however, may be quite different than the way it was pictured in Renaissance paintings. It looks as if those who have clamored the loudest for a conservative administration may destroy it in a spasm of voyeurism.

Or perhaps it is just the contrary. This administration's most ferocious detractors have labeled it a sort of reverse Robin Hood gang which takes from the poor to enrich the rich. How is it, then, that the richest of the rich exhibit such a manifest distrust? Perhaps—O horror of horrors!—the poor perceive the intentions of this administration in quite a different way from what the pundits want the poor to know. The best proof that it may be so was, perhaps, the fancy footwork in the opinion polls which could be noticed, recently, by anyone who watched the CBS Evening News.

Opposition on the Right

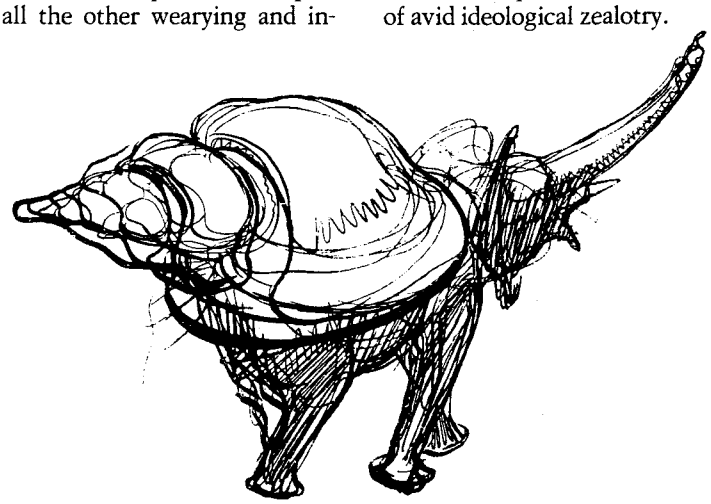
President Reagan's nomination of Mrs. Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court has transformed the discontented murmurings of New Right social activists into angry shouts of disapproval. Charges of betrayal make the rounds, as many of those who numbered themselves among Ronald Reagan's firmest supporters have concluded that the President has reneged on his promise to cleanse America of a noisome social liberalism. As if the barrage of abuse from the left were not enough, President Reagan must now contend with opposition from among his own people.

This will not do: President Reagan and the New Right need one another; as Benjamin Franklin said on the eve of the American Revolution, we must hang together or we'll all hang separately. Does the New Right seriously believe that it could elect one of its own—say, a Jesse Helms—to the Presidency? Even assuming the improbable, would a President Helms, once faced with the anguishing responsibilities of power, dance to a tune played by New Right pipers? Lyndon Johnson, yearning to embrace us in a Texas bear hug, used to remind us that he was President of *all* the people; well, Ronald Reagan is now President of all the people, and he has to remember that.

Yet President Reagan cannot afford to turn his back on *his* people. Not only did they vote for him in large numbers, but they stuffed envelopes, distributed leaflets, manned telephones and performed all the other wearying and inglorious chores so essential to electoral success. Even more important, the New Right raised those moral issues that gave the Reagan campaign its *raison d'être* and helped to turn it from yet another ill-begotten exercise in me-tooism into a call for moral revival and national renewal.

Mr. Reagan cannot overlook the very human trait of *those* and *his* people, namely that they have grown impatient and frustrated as their deepest concerns have been shunted onto a siding to clear the tracks for the tax and budget cutters. Mrs. O'Connor, with her shaky stance on abortion and ERA, did nothing to reassure the New Right that once President Reagan took his mind off the economy all would be well. One does not need to be an ideological fanatic to feel the nagging fear that the high hopes of January 1981 might degenerate into politics as usual.

As President, Mr. Reagan must negotiate a treacherous course filled with exigent compromise, shifting alliances, clambering interest groups and the unwieldy machinery of government. He cannot bring us into the promised land, for no such thing exists in this world. What he can do is to turn America in a different direction, away from the social liberalism that has brought us to such a sorry pass. The New Right had best forgive him a few Sandra Day O'Connors, lest it paint itself into the corner of avid ideological zealotry. □



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COMMENT

(continued from page 5)

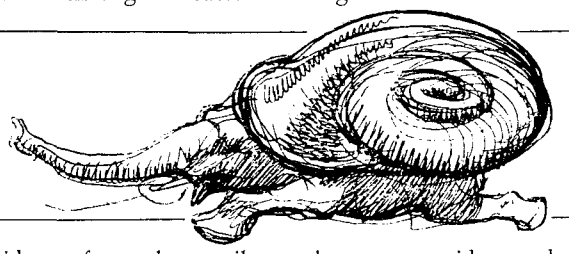
for persistent social and moral leveling, reflect a world view that has come to permeate popular culture. Its conduits have been the media, mainline churches and middlebrow literature. The liberal outlook has caught on, among other reasons, because of its appeal to moral concern and egalitarian fervor within a residually religious democratic society. Liberal teachings which began as the monopoly of Agnew's "effete snobs" eventually became the mark of "morally sensitive individuals," obsessively ashamed of racism, sexism and other vestiges of an allegedly unjust, nonegalitarian past.

I believe the Moral Majority has been effective because of its own egalitarian appeal. While liberals preach equality in license and emphasize humanity's sensual-material nature, the Moral Majority insists upon equality in virtue and seeks to impose upon all Americans equal spiritual obligations. According to Montesquieu, it is virtue which holds republics together, just as it is honor which cements aristocracy and legality which supports monarchy. Although the Moral Majority may exalt the spirit of material acquisitiveness, as Dr. Thompson convincingly shows, its strong card remains republican virtue. Nor is it historically relevant whether its arguments are rough around the edges. What counts is that large segments of our democratic citizenry demand that we exchange an equality of lifestyles for shared virtue and patriotic commitment. The Moral Majority has been an effective catalyst in bringing about this change. Conservative intellectuals may lament the so-called countercultural annihilation of norms as eloquently as Dr. Thompson does, yet without the Falwells of this world our protest would have little popular impact.

This brings me to my last point, which is Hegel's perception of the cunning of history. Hegel notes, like many others, that Biblical Providence frequently achieves Its ends through improbable means. The Old Testament reveals the divine law through a stuttering Moses amidst a formerly servile nation. In the New Testament, Paul repeatedly associates universal redemption with "the scandal of the Cross." These paradoxes are meant to test human faith, to demonstrate the sovereignty of Providence, to exemplify Its power to extract good from even the lowliest or least plausible source. In secular history Hegel observed a similar principle at work. Out of self-serving passions comes human good; out of personal suffering springs cultural betterment; and, finally, out of small, unnoticed changes occur momentous breaks with the past. Hegel identified this transformational power with the cunning of the World Spirit in history; and this, he believed, could never be entirely grasped by the human mind.

Such an idea may be partly therapeutic for Tory critics of the Moral Majority. That conservative men of letters have not been the ones to kindle the moral fire which is currently displacing liberal permissiveness should sober rather than irritate us. Things are changing because of the private grievances, wounded pride and personal hopes of countless millions. The results of these changes may not always please an advocate of moderation or one who, like Dr. Thompson, craves the *juste milieu.* But few if any significant historical changes have transpired in accordance with the Golden Mean—in doing our sums it may be helpful to keep this in mind.

The Virginian farmer, whom Dr. Thompson describes as outraged by the alien values impinging on his life, may sense better than does any intellectual the cultural ferment of our time. Not well-honed logic but broken dreams, human frustration and challenged social instincts are producing



the present widespread passion for old truths. Intellectuals may assist the movement which this passion has engendered, but they have no real power to control it. At most they can advise or admonish the spokesmen for a moral force that has become culturally effective without them. I personally have no quarrel with this state of affairs. The Moral Majoritarians have made cultural inroads in spite of the revulsion of America's intellectual establishment. Their New Right allies continue to win elections in the teeth of venomous academic and journalistic opposition. Like Dr. Thompson, I would like Heaven and more: in this case, conservative victories being won by witty, elegant men bearing a stylistic affinity to, say, Metternich or Disraeli. But I won't hold my breath until this happens. I am too busy rejoicing that our country has not come unglued as quickly as I once feared. And I thank the Moral Majority for helping to forestall this grim dissolution. Despite their uncouthness, Moral Majoritarians are impressing upon our countrymen their moral and military obligations. In view of this success, I can only marvel at still another instance of the cunning of history.

—Paul Gottfried

Dr. Gottfried is an historian and a senior editor of Modern Age.

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